**The Language of Protest Project**

Throughout our semester in our class we studied influential American writers who had an impact on society. These writers protested against what they thought were wrong in their worlds and now it’s our turn. Our final project it is a creative writing project about protest. We will try to change the perspective of our audience with poems, short stories and music. This writing and music is related to a researched topic about a modern injustice or another attitude, situation or condition that we find unjust. Our songs’ lyrics, as well as our writings, express our discontent with the injustice in the world that we hope to change in a peaceful and positive way. So to start things off…

**Another Day…Things Will Get Better by Leyla Kaplan**

*Author’s note: I wrote this poem about our generation. While our future may be difficult and the tasks that must be accomplished are daunting, it isn’t hopeless.*

Another day

Get up in the morning it’s

Already done

I will never say it’s

Going to get better

We know that the world is

Done with us

We’ll never be

The best generation

You know what we are?

Careless

If the world will fall into our hands how can we be

Growing into something better

We’re confident that we are

A lost cause

We don’t listen to those who say we’re

Special and

School is important and

We listen to those who say

Teens will accomplish nothing

Don’t say that

We’re fine

We know that we never will be

So call us hopeless

We’ll accept your doubts

The world will stop turning before

Another good day comes

We know that

Everything is empty

It’s not true that

Things will get better

**NOW… read it backwards!!**

**Exhibition Program**

* 1. **Leyla Kaplan**

1. **Ikaika – “Facebook Girl”**
2. **Brian Riley**
3. **Spontaneous Infantile Combustion – “Fox News”**
   1. **Sylvia Gholson**
4. **Black Rose – “Untitled”**
   1. **Carol Tran**
   2. **Ray Benito**
5. **The Brian Rileys – “I don’t know why”**
   1. **Claire Sepulveda**
   2. **Sierra Hense**
6. **The Minorities – “Ode to Justin Bieber”**
   1. **Nile Ross**
7. **Ronald Ray Gun – “Lost at Sea”**
   1. **Jazminee Valdez**
8. **Angry Politicians – “World Struggles”**
   1. **Olivia Marquez– poem and video**
9. **Hoarse Horses – “What’s Wrong”**
   1. **Holly West**
10. **The Shaven Legs – “Track 1”; “Old Man Murray”**
    1. **Pia Rivet**
11. **Sour Patch Girls – “Long Hair”**
    1. **Celina Galindez**
    2. **Jarrett Jenkins**
12. **Keen Kids – “A Merry Christmas?”**
    1. **Matt Ripley**
13. **The Usual Suspects – “Pete Runs with Bike”; “All That You Wanted”**
    1. **Anna Walsh**
    2. **Sam Dice**

**Stand up for your rights**

**Silence By Erin Daley**

*Author’s note: I was inspired to write this poem after reading the poem “Speak Out” by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Many of my ideas stem from his poem. America is supposed to be the country made by the people, and their voices are what make our country free. I was trying to encourage people to exercise their rights and speak out for what they believe in rather than remaining silent.*

You come to America in search of a dream

Looking for freedom

You are in the land of listeners

You come to be heard

Yet you do not speak

There is silence all around

And when your father’s voice gets torn to shreds

From a blast fired by an enemy with no righteous cause

You will weep for the sound of his voice

That sang you to sleep at night

You weep for him, but not for your country

The country that you praised for having promise

But the freedom bells that once rang are dimming

When the people that chimed them get tired

**The World by Samantha Dice**

*Author’s note: I chose this poem because it seems to be a more positive type of protest poem. I think that the world changing starts with ourselves and that most of us think that the change needs to be huge and completely over our heads. I, however, believe the change starts with us and that message is given clearly in this poem.*

The pain, the heart break, the suffering, and crime

It seems as though no one has the time

To lend a hand to a stranger.

But it’s not worth putting yourself in danger.

Everyone speaks of change and how they want it so

But all we need to do is be kind

and watch our good deeds grow.

Yes, we are all hurt and alone

But all we need is to escape our comfort zone.

Change little by little not the world, just ourselves

By starting this movement you just might compel

The ones you love to change as well.

**To Be Free (a found poem) by Osmar Verduzco**

*Author’s note: The Song is from Les Miserable which gave me the idea to write about the slaves who want to be free. And tomorrow they should have it.*

To be free

When tomorrow comes

Join in

Stand up

Do you hear

The people singing.

the music

Beyond the barricade

Is a life.

The Beating of a heart

Echoes the beating

About to start.

Angry men

Give all you can.

Some will fall

not to be slaves again.

Blood of the martyrs

About to start

When tomorrow comes.

**Care-Do Something by Nick Brinkerhoff**

*Author’s note: I wrote this poem because people complain about wanting/needing change, but the things they claim need changing, are trivial. There are so many other less-fortunate countries that could benefit exponentially, if only we could direct our actions devoted towards change towards them.*

Let justice wisp through the winds

You have to live with the blood on your hands

Can you do that?

Can you keep on living

When your fellow citizens

Neighbors

And your fellow humans are suffering?

Because you don’t care

Because you’re lazy

Because they’re a world away?

People are enslaved

You complain over the wrong food

But they don’t even have enough food

You complain about what brand of water you have

They don’t even have a reliable water source

**Polarize by Brian Riley**

*Author’s note: My piece is a protest against the superficiality of modern politics. I feel that too many people just vote on the party line without really considering anything. It's depressing that we end up with people opposing bills and initiatives they've said they believe in, just because it was proposed by the enemy. I want people to put in more time with conventional analysis, that is, learning information and deciding, rather than hearing a one-sided case and rolling with it. I think modern politics can be best represented by an End-User License Agreement: People just scroll to the bottom and click "I Agree."*

Black and White

Red and Blue

Pick a side

There’s only two

Thinking is hard

No time for reason

Two sets of opinions

It’s election season!

Talking heads, show us the way

Which party will win today

We flip a coin on voting day

Who is *that* guy, anyway?

It’s their fault, and we can fix it

There’s only two ways: right and wrong

Us vs. Them on the ballot ticket

Third parties are practically gone

Fifty-one percent to win

First through the gate beats the rest

Reasoning is out the window

It’s a breeding contest!

Before it started the debate was done

Use facts and figures all you want

If I’m more stubborn, it means I’ve won

Substitute arguments with taunts

We can’t be like them, that’s hypocritical

Let them hear our screams

Come on, folks! Let’s get radical!

Race to the extremes!

North Pole, South Pole

Me and you

Pick a side

There’s only two.

**Change -- by Mason McGhee**

*Author’s note: Change is my favorite (out of my exhibition-appropriate ones) because I really like the overall statement of the poem, in which I am stressing the need to change injustice in general. Also I use the phrase “Can you spare any change?” to reference the homeless and less fortunate population, products of capitalism and human greed. So overall I am advocating the need for change in general to end all injustice, while stressing the issue of poverty and greed.*

Can you spare any change?  
I don’t think I can  
So here is a twenty  
Because change is my plan.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Just a nickel of hope  
Change is needed  
To be able to cope.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Change your world or mine  
A blank check of rebellion  
Will work just fine.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Or even a smile  
Come sit in my shoes  
Do something worthwhile.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Because it is all that we need  
A small revolution  
Fight off ranting greed.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Or will you sit still and watch  
As your friends and fellow citizens  
Are kicked straight in the crotch.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
It’s for a good cause  
To rid all injustice  
You will get your applause.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
Any dream or a passion  
To spread joy in a time  
Where greed is the fashion.  
  
Can you spare any change?  
To your best friend or foe  
Because despite all our differences  
Happiness must grow.  
We can all use some change  
Over here or over there  
So give change today

Give justice its share.  
**One Nation Under God -- by Nile Ross**

*Author’s note: I chose this poem because I felt that the points within it are things that we should think about and consider every day. I always hear how we as Americans are proud to claim this country, but are we just being hypocrites or are we actually living by our beliefs?*

One Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for…

Well you get the point

As we stand to say the Pledge of Allegiance

Do we really take it into consideration?

The United States loves to claim that it is “The best.”

But is it really? Time for a reality check.

Is everyone here REALLY treated equally?

If Martin Luther King Jr. came back

would he be proud of what we have accomplished?

Or would he hang his head in despair?

Is the war against the Middle East really necessary?

Who are we really benefiting?

When we see a homeless person on the street with a sign for money or food,

Do we really stop to give them something?

Or do we look straight ahead and pretend to not see them?

When we see someone being bullied or mistreated do we stand up for them

Or do we join in on the harassment?

Do we make racists comments or jokes?

Do we resist even listening to them?

Are women getting the pay that they deserve?

Or are they still treated like 2nd class citizens?

Who has the right to tell someone who they should or shouldn’t marry?

If a man wanted to marry another man, whose choice is it besides theirs?

These are just a few of the many questions that we should ask ourselves

Before we claim that we are “The best.”

**Poverty**

**The Face of Homeless -- by Nicky England**

*Author’s Note: I choose to present my poem on homelessness because most people don't realize that our stereotypes about homeless people are often wrong. Most homeless started out just like us but just had some bad luck.*

You pass me by without a second glance

You assume I do drugs,

don’t work,

have mental problems,

am unclean,

and don’t have an education

What you don’t know is that I am someone’s

father, mother, sister, brother, daughter, son, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather

I worked for a long time and just lost my job after buying a house

No one knows that I am homeless

I sleep in my car with my children

I work the night shift at Taco Bell

I beg during the day to feed my kids

I only eat dinner most days

so my kids can have more food

You see me on the street

You also see me at the PTA meeting

But you don’t recognize me because you never really look at me

You look the other way when I walk by you

You thought I would ask you for money

You did this because you knew deep down

that I could be you

You felt guilty for just having spent $6 at Starbucks

when that could feed my whole family

for the entire day

You did this because you judged me

without really knowing me

Because I am homeless

**No Home Rap – by Chad Kerley**

Homelessness is a problem.

Why can’t we just solve them?

It’s not fair for people to lie on the streets crawlin’

They cry for help but can anyone hear?

They get the stereotype that all they want is beer.

But it’s not true all they want is help.

If only the government would listen and they felt,

The pain that they’re in with no place to go.

The chills that they feel when the ground carries snow.

The world isn’t fair but this problem can be fixed.

All these people want is a place to go and sit.

Yes it will take time, but why not start now?

It will only happen sooner if we all buckled down.

They just need to gather and sit to brainstorm,

Before they let another year go with hearts torn.

This is enough and it’s time to take a stand,

For the homeless people in this world *we need a plan*.

**This is my Life -- by Lauren Mize**

*The poem I selected was about being homeless. I think this is a big problem in our society that is easily looked upon. I also choose this because it was one that I felt most passionate about, and something*

*that I could easily write about.*

Nowhere is

home to me

I don’t feel safe

anywhere

My hopes and spirits are what keep me going

Confusion seeks the mind

I am alone,

I stay strong but with limited connections

Living day to day,

Hour to Hour

Seeing happy families

Happy faces

Successful people

If only that could be me

That side of the street you walk past each morning,

I call it my home.

The food you throw away,

I scavenge for it,

While my hungry belly grumbles.

Family, what family?

I’ve never experience that before?

The sounds of cars that zoom past day to day

I’m use to it

I notice the sky getting darker, darker again.

Another cold night on the streets

when will this ever end?

**Children’s rights**

**Too Young to Die -- by Mayra Hernandez**

*The reason why I chose this poem was because it talks about the boys that become soldiers at a very young age. I thought this poem was the most detailed out of the other poems that I wrote. This issue still occurs and it is very disappointing that young boys have to go and confront a battlefield and fight for their rights. The poem conveys a child being forced into the war at a young age and having to leave his school and become something he did not want to be.*

I am ten years old

and I like to fight for my country

I forced to fight when I was 7 years old

I remember I was playing tag

with my friends outside my door

When a truck pulls over and picks me up

Next thing I know I am riding in the back of a truck

to a place where it is full of men

Injured, and screaming, and they are not playing pretend

I get scared and try to run

But, a soldier captures me and pulls out a gun

I am then a soldier too

I get dragged over to see what I am about to do

They train me how to point and shoot

I feel like one of them

and I feel like a brute

I was taught that killing was not in God’s forgiveness

I thought of this when I first became a witness

Bodies everywhere and on the ground

Bombs exploding; blood spilling onto the ground

It was not my decision to be what I am now

I had to leave my school; I no longer have an education

This does not only occur to me

it impacts children all over the nation

We can’t fight the battle but we can fight the war

We don’t have to go through this anymore

We can stand up for our rights

We can fight and fight

We could find the path that gives us what is right

**It’s Not Fair -- by Matthew Ripley**

*I really like this poem of mine. I chose it because it is about my topic, child labor. I also chose it because I really think that I did a good job drawing emotion from the reader.*

What have you come to?

You used to love me

You used to protect me

Do you remember when you were me?

I do

Do you remember when ..

They forced you to work in the factory and

You were frightened and

You learned to not think and

You had no one to look up to besides those below you so

You gave up fighting

And they took advantage of you

And then You changed

That is when you became you

The one I despise

The one I am changing into

Let’s end the cycle

Let’s not sacrifice another generation with your greed

You can end the race to the bottom

by taking the high road

We disserve our future

not your past

**An Epiphany by Soeren Schmidt**

*Author’s note: This poem is the one that best caught what i wanted to achieve within poetry, and therefore I chose to present this one. I found it interesting to look at child labor around the world as it's something that's a big issue and it didn't seem like much was being done against it.*

The weather is fine, in room 6 1 9

Biko the kid, was dreaming a bit

When the wind caught on, in the summer storm

The blow from the thought

Came high from above

He started seeing through the eyes of the world

How welfare and love changes its meaning

when you’re a kid wanting to play

But get the sounds of hate.

After seeing this, he saw how it should be

A world without child labor,

and without cruelty

This is what he saw.

**Conform Me by Pia Rivet**

*Author’s Note: I chose this poem because I feel like it is a very relatable poem, especially for high school students at this age. My essay was on this topic and I feel like it reflects many struggles we go through for student expression in a school environment.*

Define me,

Strip me,

Deprive me,

Of me.

All these rules

All these conditions

We must follow

Because *you’re* above us,

You tell us?

This is evident.

This handbook,

You give me.

Implies that you are in charge,

And I am a follower.

But I am not a follower.

I am a leader.

My own leader.

Deprive me,

Of me.

Tell me to be different,

But make me just the same.

Place me in the midst of authoritarianism

I am not a free citizen, in a free society.

Prepare me for outside humanity

Yet grant me no freedom

No ripped jeans

No exposed shoulders

No facial piercings

No political messages

No damn t-shirts?

Censor me.

Deprive me,

Of me.

Rob me of my personal liberty

Rob me of my connection to the real world

Rob me of every shred of my self-worth

Rob me of my voice

Take away my individuality

Take away my eccentricity

Take away my distinctiveness

Conform me.

Restrict me from defying you

Restrict me from self-expression

Blend me in with similar society

Make me sickeningly symmetrical

Suppress me,

Oppress me.

Deprive me,

Of me.

**Women’s Rights**

**Because I Had to… by Holly West**

*I wrote a series of 10 poems about the life a young girl in Iran. I chose my poem about her experience of being raped by her arranged husband because I felt that it showcases the injustices that are committed against Iranian women in everyday life.*

My daily routine

It never wavers

It never fails

Sweep, Wash, Cook

Repeat

Repeat

Thoughts

Endlessly running through my mind

Tears continually shed

Being away from my family

Staying with this monster

Alone

All alone

With no escape

Afraid of the promises that marriage brings

Promises a ten year old is not able to fulfill

For a 48 year old man

Terrified of what will happen

When the sun goes down

When the lights turn off

Under the covers

That used to hide me from the terrors

That kept me safe and warm

Fear has crept its way under

Under the sheets

Into my life

I lead my life in fear

Only the shell of the girl I was before

No laughs, smiles or leaps of joy

It is no longer there

I am Ava Paria no more

My worst nightmares have happened

One night in September

He slithered in

Unwelcome, Unwanted

But still he was there

Scratchy face and unclean hands

Touching me all over

I let him do it because I had no choice

Taking my virginity and dignity

I am scared forever because of that night

**Society is Wrong – By Celina Galindez**

*Author’s Note: I chose this poem because there are a lot of girls in the world, who are very insecure and feel that they aren’t living up to peoples expectation. Sometimes they need someone else to tell them otherwise.*

Dead wrong  
We're taught that exotic is beautiful  
We're taught to believe that miniature waists, and perfect tans are hot  
We're convinced that the blonde girls

With the gorgeous smiles

will win every time  
But, the truth is  
Originality is beautiful  
Big brown eyes, green eyes, blue eyes  
Curves  
Your natural skin tone is beautiful  
Your hair color, your smile  
Your voice, your laugh, your personality  
Every inch of you is beautiful,

every single part of you shines with your essence  
You, my dear  
You're lovely

**Flawed By Jarrett Jenkins**

*Author’s note: I chose this poem because people try so hard to look like someone they aren’t and this is the one I cared about the most and felt most adamantly about*

You’re ugly

But I have a solution

Maybe, if you spend your money on these products

And coat yourself in them, people will like you

Yeah, something like that

In fact, without these products, people won’t like you

Especially you, you little girls

The sooner you catch on, the more pretty you will be

That’s what’s beautiful

The women on the magazines and the TV

They don’t have those freckles like you do

Or those flaws

**Flaws**

I emphasize the word

A flaw, something that’s wrong with you

And if you don’t look like the women portrayed through the media,

you are flawed

Your humanity is demeaned

You are less of a person

Trust me

**Homosexual Rights**

**More Than You Know by Olivia Marquez**

*Author’s note: I wrote this poem in dedication to my grandma and nana who have raised me since I was about two years old. My brother soon came and lived with us also, and now we are just one big family. I owe everything I have to my grandma and nana, who have kept me going in school, sports and everything else in life. My grandmother has taught me about rights and wrongs in all sorts of situations, and my nana has taught me to always do my best in everything I do no matter what. I owe who I am to them, and I want to thank them for everything they have given me.*

For as long as I can remember

I’ve grown up with these two

They’ve acted like mothers

They’ve done everything they could do

They took us in

When we needed it most

They opened their arms

To become most gracious hosts

My grandma and nana

My Susy and Sue

I want to thank them

For raising us two

My brother is with me

He lives with us too

We all live together

My family grew

I love them both

To death and beyond

I don’t know where I would be

For I have been happy for long

We are a happy four

We eat dinners at night

And yes we make jokes

And yes we play fight

We argue and yell

But it doesn’t last long

We all just make up

We try and stay strong.

They just want what’s best

For Alex and I

When I depart to college

I know they will cry

They help us with school

Keep up with our grades

Every Monday morning

Its starts out the same

“You have a B- in math”

My nana will say

“Yes” I speak

“Now leave it alone, okay?”

We all look different

They’re blond and pale

My brother and I

Are on a different scale.

I love them both

More then you know

I don't want to leave them

But I must grow

Before I leave them

There’s something they should know

That their love will be with me

Where ever I go.

**Wait a Little Longer -- by Claire Sepulveda**

Wait a little longer

I’m sorry for the risk

But I need you to settle down

And let it all dismiss

Steady your head down

On the cold cement floor

Just don’t let your head get caught

In their dismissive damn doors

It’s a whole lot

To ignore the ocean’s rage

When tides are so broken

Causing you to lose your faith

When whirlpools sink you in

Bending your fragile structure

Sending you to the bottom

Where fear is all that will luster

Shattering like a time bomb

Sending your life to ruptures

With the uneasiness that you hold

That will drown your hopes

Make you distress

Only able to obsess

Over their problems

Of not wanting to accept

As they tie the rope

Around your neck

It only brings fear

Destroying all your options to cope

**The Locker by Sierra Hense**

*Author’s note: “The Locker” is about a young teen in high school who fears going to gym class because he is taunted for his homosexual orientation. I wrote this poem to bring attention to the very current issue of LBGT rights and the harassment young homosexual are going through on a daily basis. I was inspired to write this story after listening to a speech last at an AVID convention. There was a boys speech that really touched me it was about his freshman year and how he was beaten in the locker room his freshman year. He was beaten and made fun of for being openly gay. So I wanted to write something that would evoke a strong emotion from the reader. Hoping to inform them that this issue is very big and needs to be addressed so things like this can be stopped.*

I get up in the morning

Throw on some clothes

I am late for school again

I run to catch the bus

I take a seat

Right next to the driver

I am always late

Purposely

The Goosebumps begin to form

My hands start to get clammy

I am dreading my first period

Gym

I walk in slyly

Trying not to get noticed

Mostly everyone is dressed

And Outside taking role

I made it

I am safe

Then I hear it

The sound of Doc Martens hitting the linoleum

That laughter

One that whistles through the gap in his teeth

Two other laughs echoing their leader

His friends…The hyenas

My heart begins to beat faster

My breath becomes faster

My throat goes dry

I feel sick

Tyler!Tyler!Tyler!

They are looking for me

Spotted their eyes grow big

They glow crimson red

I am surrounded

I feel a sharp pain in my stomach

I take a blow to the head

I see colors

The darkness

I awake

Cold and sore

I am in a small cramped space

It smells like a mixture of paint, blood and old socks

When I call for help I hear nothing

After what seems like hours

A janitor come and lets me out

He saw the whole thing but says nothing to me

Just walks off

It is seven at night

I go to the bathroom mirror

My reflection is shameful, disgusting, and repulsive

I am covered in dry blood

And the word

FAGGOT

Is written everywhere

**Blood in the Peach Trees -- by Delaney Gilespie**

*Author’s note: I chose this except because I feel that it really captures the whole point of the story. People should be more accepting of other people’s opinions thoughts and beliefs especially the gay and lesbian community that has been the victim of social injustice for far too long.*

**Summary of story: When a young homosexual man is murdered in a sunny Georgia suburb, Brinn Salem, an accomplished forensic scientist, is anxious to solve the case and move on. Faced with many possible motives for murder Brinn and her partner Special Agent Jacob Rushlen hunt down everyone who knew the young man including his religious fanatic father, his boyfriend, and a long time bully. Brinn begins to feel that the young man was killed because of his sexuality. She and Jake begin to realize the horrific effect that human intolerance can have on people’s lives.**

“I was leading a protest against homosexually and same sex marriage,” he said quietly. “Keith was across the street advocating for it. I saw him and Josh kiss and it made me sick to my stomach. I had told him so many times that he was wrong. I told him so many times that bad things would happen to him if he didn’t change.”

“So you bashed in his head, strangled him, then hung him from the ceiling?” Brinn demanded, breaking the quietness that still surrounded them.

“God wanted me to do it. He wants me to erase those who are an abomination,” Patrick yelled. “I was doing what was right.”

“You think that God told you to cover up a violent homicide with a suicide?” Brinn shouted back. “Did God also tell you to drive away your wife? Or to drink yourself until you were hysterical?”

“That was before God saved me and welcomed me into his arms,” Patrick pleaded.

“Frankly I think you were better off before,” Brinn hissed and turned her back. “Who are you to judge what love is pure and what love isn’t?” She spat over her shoulder and stormed back to the car. Jacob recited the rights for the second time that day and handcuffed Patrick Whittier. Jake led him to the car and put him in the backseat.

“I was only doing what Keith deserved. I warned him,” Patrick growled.

“You think that Keith deserved to die because he loved someone? What makes his love for Josh any less than the love you had for your wife? You killed your own son for doing something humans are programmed to do. To find a mate in life. Just because Keith’s mate wasn’t traditional doesn’t mean that it’s wrong.” Brinn turned, wide eyed and frantic, to Jacob. “The human race will never succeed if we don’t learn to accept one another for what we are,” she whispered, her bottom lip quivering. Jacob gently placed his hand over hers and squeezed it tight.

**Embrace All Love -- by Mint Dalton**

*Author’s note: I am really passionate about this issue because I think this is one of the most relevant human issues topics affecting our society today. By denying a constitutional right to a small group of people, as a society we are saying that we do not support their lifestyles and do not think they deserve the same rights. This can lead to many issues in a community because it promotes intolerance towards a group of people who cannot help the way they were born. Also, because gay couples are denied the right to marry, they face financial consequences such as social security and medical insurance; the right to visit their spouse in the hospital; security of the couple and their children.*

In the words of John Lennon

“its easy if you try”

Try to embrace love, all love

And make everybody feel high

From Bob in Jamaica

Standing up for his rights

Men and women everywhere

Start reaching for those lights

You may say Im a dreamer

Saying it’s a brotherhood of man

But does the abundance of love

Stray from your life plan?

Men can love men, and for women it’s the same

Its more than just a silly game

This is their lives we’re talking about

So not for one minute shall we doubt

The validity of their love, of their feelings, of their passions

So its finally time for us to take some action

Preacherman, don’t tell me

Heaven wont shine for my love

Brothers, sisters, sons and daughters

They will all be accepted above

**Racial injustices**

**Racism -- by Ricky Gonzalez**

*Author's note: I chose this poem because I thought that Racism is a huge problem in the world. No matter what language you speak there is racism between countries. I think that words can be used as weapons too. I think that anything that is used to attack or harm someone should be considered a weapon. People should not get hurt my other people’s harsh words. We should just not based a person by their appearance, like they say “don’t judge a book by its cover.” Many of us have done it before and some people we have judged in the beginning are now friends or something closer. We live in a country where we can find any type of race. We should be able to have each other’s back whenever we need them.*

One word

A bad word

A group that is singled out

A group just minding their own business

We are all different

No one likes to be the same

We may have different thoughts

But we are not enemies

Why can’t we all be friends?

Why do we have to be in the same group?

Why can’t we break the chains?

Everyone is in danger

In this war of words

Everyone is in it

Why does everyone attack each other?

Why can’t we stop it?

Fear

How can we stop it?

Love

**The Law – by Tevon Hodge**

*This my favorite poem because I think it shows my views about the law that Arizona passed not to long ago.*

The law gives you the right to judge

The law gives you the right to look at the hair

The law gives you the right to look the lifestyle

The law lets you judge

Not by the content of the character

But by the color of the skin

The law gives you the right to say

“LOOK AN ILLEGAL”

The law doesn’t judge

But the people who enforce it do

**Racism -- by Ben Graham**

*I chose this topic because it used to be a big issue and protest in history. But now people are racist without even knowing they are. It feels like this issue should be more aware of and a stop to this problem too.*

Racism has historical significance

M.L.K. took the stand

And had Hard and painful fights

But didn’t he affect history

Yes, but just a time in history

And we need to be reminded

At this time in history:

One Mexican drives by

He gets pulled over

One Caucasian drives past

Twenty over speed limit

He doesn’t get stopped

Walking through an airport

Not knowing if you’re going to get stopped

A Middle Eastern female

walks through security

She gets stopped

One male walks through

He doesn’t gets acknowledged

The male turns out

To be the highjacker

On a daily basis,

We need to remember M.L.K.’s struggles and Convictions

So society doesn’t repeat history again

**Lie by Lie -- by Martin Lira**

*Author’s note: The reason why I choose this is because I see this injustice every day. I can relate to this issue personally and have a perspective that reflects my culture.*

Coming to this country with money in mind

Selling our souls and leaving everything behind

Our presence here is considered a crime

Be here long enough and you will do time

Land of the free?

for who?

Americans Citizens?

“Someone born in the US,

someone born outside the US to a US citizen parent,

or one who has naturalized or obtained a certificate of citizenship.”

This country was built on immigrants

Now that you no longer want us

you think you can just keep us behind the border

The only difference with us

is we are here to built and contribute to society

Not tear down nations

and kill kids

and rape women

You excuse everything by thinking of yourself as a Explorer?

Tribe by tribe dies

but it’s okay

the ones that survived get Indian reservations.

Lie by lie

**Injustices of War**

**A Response to A True War Story – by Sylvia Gholson**

*Author’s note: This poem is a response to a short piece we read in class called A True War Story. This literature from the perspective of a man who went through World War II, discusses the common misconception that war is glorious, and brave. But what it truly is brutal and honest and unfair. However, he talks about how beautiful the world seems when you survive an attack, and how much you realize what it is to be alive. I chose this poem because I felt that it best conveyed the issue I am protesting, which is how little people truly know about what war truly is.*

The sky and world bleach blue,

It leaks lights with the morning cries.

Singing the sun awake,

Singing the moon asleep.

Feet cold, blisters popping,

But better pain than nothing at all.

Golden grass, silver trees,

Purple yellow capped mountains looming miles above.

Quiet as men breath deep,

Slowly and purely,

Knowing it may be their last.

Someone reshuffles their clunky black plastic piece.

The last thing he has left to bring.

Moments turn to hours,

As the frozen scene loses time.

The only movement the fog from their mouths,

Stirring and swirling the air,

As the yellow fingers outstretch.

They creep closer to the toes of the lost,

Those who’ve never won.

They cringe away from the glowing tendrils knowing that with the day comes chaos.

The trees sway,

The grass ripples,

The clouds sail,

The orb rotates,

And then the light touches red liquid.

Thick with weariness, leaking from the holes in their soles.

It explodes in fire and heat and dirt and flesh.

While the rest of us go on blindly in our own order.

**A True War Story -- by Javier Leyra**

A true war story,

A story about a heroic person,

Heroic because not only he is giving his life for his country,

But he will give his life to protect the life of someone else,

Someone he doesn’t know,

Someone who is a stranger to him,

But that never stops him,

A true war story,

Is not how they won a war,

A true war story,

Is not books related or about a war,

A true war story,

Should be about the people,

Who passed away during the war,

Because some of them,

Sacrificed themselves,

Gave their lives,

To save the lives of other people,

A true war story is about this and not other things

**The War Feeling – by Armand de la Garza**

*Authors Note: I wrote this poem in response to “How to tell a true war story” by Tim O’Brian. I believe any type of war is bad and people exposed to war need support. Veterans of war have been exposed to life changing experiences that can cause mental and emotional harm. This poem is about the feeling you get when you experience of the killing and horrors of war*

There’s a certain feeling

That anyone who has experienced war knows.

Once you have taken someone’s life,

And you see their final expression on their face.

There is no feeling of happiness or triumph in war,

Only fear, hatred and disgrace.

From the cockpit of a plane

When you are looking down,

At all the little people

In the unsuspecting town.

When you push the button,

To let the bombs go,

You can’t look away from the death,

It’s a beautiful light show.

The feeling that you get

Deep inside your core

This is a protest

A protest against all that is war.

**War Is Nothing But A Love Story -- by Carol Tran**

*Author’s note: I wrote this poem during an in class writing response to a reflection that Tim O’Brian did to one of his books. He stated that the many reasons why he decided to go to war was to feel the love from his friends, family and most importantly his country. The reason why I decided to choose to share this poem was because it gives a different perspective on the idea of war that many people do not realize. I repeat the line “love is nothing but a love story” or at least try to rephrase it in different ways, to show that if a person does think deeply about the idea of what a soldier has to go through while being deployed and away from home, that most of their decisions are all based out of love.*

War is nothing but a love story

Filled with beating hearts full of anxiety

Endless tears and sorrowful goodbyes

Leaving the family you have behind.

You see war is nothing but a love story

Built up with draft notices

Leaving one’s opinions contradictory

Between selfishness or fighting for one’s country.

War is nothing but a love story

Bottled up with hatred and terror

Explosions and masked corpses lying in the unknown

Soldiers hopelessly scared for other lives and their own.

You see war is anything but your average love story

It is not filled with broken hearts and jealousy

Nor does it involve backstabbing and secrecy

It is a story full of fear but out of love for mankind’s security.

War is raw and gritty

War is not a fairytale -- it is far away from dreamy

But at the end of the day

War is nothing but a love story.

**THIS IS WAR -- by Raymond Benito**

*I chose this topic for my poem because I believe that a lot of people believe that war is evil or soldiers are evil. Others believe war is the first and only answer and that all who don't agree are just America hating people. I believe that war is both good and bad. Bad because we use the lives of men and use precious resources to fight a war that might have been solved with a pen. But war is good because there are times when that bullet must exit from the barrel and enter into your enemy. Sometimes the pen cannot solve the troubles we have with one another or stop a genocide soon enough. War is necessary but it should always be the last resort. War just is.*

Of disgust, of beauty

Of courage, of horror

Of life, of death

Of valor, of cowardice

Beyond love and hate

To transcend these feelings

With bright eyes

Is the world clear?

When dreams fall like rain

And blood like dreams

The crimson seed drops

Mirroring its doom below

When splashed upon the earth’s loving crust

Blooming, a glass flower

A disgusting, beautiful flower

The smell of death and life in limbo

Blooming, a glass flower

The smell of courage and valor

The smell of fear and tragedy

The smell of legends born and innocence death

The truth about war?

It is love and hate incarnate

All wars are civil wars because

All men are brothers

To sight down that rifle

To bear that sword

Can you pull that trigger?

Can you swing that blade?

Baptized in fire

Crucified on bayonets

A crown of daggers

Placed upon your head

King of the dead

The cross you bear

Is the cross of many

To journey back to an alien home

Where every face is

Either sickeningly sympathetic

Or damningly disdained

But that one, that one who understands

The cross you bear is truth

Indeed, the cross you bear is war

Redder than the rose

Whiter than the lily

Blood and innocence

Go hand in hand

**A Soldier’s Story -- By Danathen Hughes**

*Author’s note: This poem is meant to represent the modern solder returning from war and all of the sacrifices they have been forced to make, only to defend their country. Once they return the United States the government has nothing but the GI bill which will pay for their school but if they lose their homes there is no help. Sometimes some of these veterans become homeless and are forced to live on the street. Is this really any way to treat someone who risked their lives for our freedoms?*

I fought for freedom

Or so I was told

I would be given better chances

Or so I was told

You would pay for my schooling

Or so I was told

You would protect me

Or so I was told

Now I live on the streets

Once again I am fighting

The cold, hunger, and mistrust

Once again I am fighting

I fought for the promises that were made

And still receive nothing

I fulfilled my part

and still receive nothing

Have I done nothing to justify being treated properly?

Once again I am fighting

I am a veteran;

And I still receive nothing

**The Truth -- by Virginia Thorsen**

*Author’s note: I picked this poem because it was my favorite one I wrote. I felt really inspired while writing this poem, although I'm not sure where the inspiration came from. Enjoy*

War.

It’s a game.

It’s happened before.

It’s happening again.

It’ll happen in the future.

So why,

Why fight it?

Why care about the dying innocents.

Why care about a better future.

Why care about the next generation.

How?

How can you stop machine guns?

With your body, of course.

What?

What can you do about government decisions?

Absolutely nothing.

Where?

Where is it happening?

Everywhere.

When?

When will it be over?

When we all die.

Who?

Who believes this?

Well, don’t you?

**Silence -- By Arielle Blumen**

*Author’s note: This poem is about unnecessary war and how people don't speak out against it when they believe it is wrong. They send people to fight, and innocent people die.*

Attacks  
Unnecessary attacks  
Keep the quiet  
Don’t say a word  
Even when it’s wrong

Don’t break the silence  
Send the young children, men, and women  
Send them to fight a war

that does not need to be fought

Where are the voices of the people  
The people who want liberty  
The people who want what is right

When will the fear of oppression stop  
Stop so the voices of the unseen and unheard will be noticed   
The ones who cannot speak up  
The ones who will not speak up  
When?

Break the fear

The fear to speak out  
The fear to speak up  
The fear of change  
The fear to take a stand  
For what is right

The fear of consequence

Believe in the outcome

The outcome of change

To better the world

To better the lives

Of the people

Don’t be afraid  
Break through the fear  
You are not alone  
In the protest against

Be explicit  
In your disagreement  
Tell the world

No one will speakNot a wordStay quiet

**Environmental/animal rights**

**“Don’t” -- by Eliza Pulido**

*I chose this poem because every year around this time of the season, I pass by the pine trees and think about where they come from. Mostly, after Christmas, I drive by trashcans and laying next to them is a brown dead tree and pine trees that were never bought for Christmas.*

**Don’t**

Chop me down

I house the animals on me

Those around me mention a story

When hairless monkeys bare their sharp teeth

One then another, our kind drop like peaceful giants

then when all can go wrong. I’m hurtled through the air and

in a mass grave along with the others, who are toppled uncomfortably

Our branches are trimmed, our legs are sliced perfectly and shaven roundly

I’m wrapped in an elastic fishnet and we’re sent to these hairless monkeys homes

Red and blue, green and white, they hang these bright globes at the edge of my branches

I’m sitting here

With sappy tears

In this room

Crying for help

**Is it Worth Looking “Pretty”? -- By Sam Dieck**

The cute rabbit sitting in its cage

It doesn’t know what’s on its schedule today

Not a care in the world

The hand that reaches for it

The needle that pierces through it

They say “success.”

Women can take a breath of relief

This will revolutionize how women will look

The rabbit says otherwise

It twitches

It pauses

It lay still

**Future Generation -- By Kaitlin Jarboe**

*Author’s note: The point of this poem is to show the audience the effects pollution can cause. I think I did a good job on the poem because it’s short and humorous. It’s to the point and interesting.*

Glistening oil on the leaves,

A foggy green river nearby,

Grass is brown,

Trash is scattered,

What a nice day for a picnic.

**Misc rights/injustices**

**The End of the Line -- By Cassius Cruz**

*Authors Note- I chose this poem out of all my poems because I feel like I could feel the main character’s pain. I also want to show how people on death row are not just people who are being executed, but I want to show that they are humans who once had lives outside of prison walls. This poem conveys how putting someone to death ends the life and memories of that person.*

He was born on a starry December night.

He took his first breath of life.

He learned to walk sooner than expected.

And when he learned to talk, he didn’t stop. He couldn’t help it.

He learned to ride a bike when he was three.

On the first day of preschool, he learned his ABC’s.

In second grade was his first crush.

And in seventh grade was his first supposed love.

In eighth grade, he felt a lonely pain.

He never knew his father and his mother was always away.

He needed a family, so he joined a gang.

He was jumped into the gang, and was beaten in the rain.

His first street fight was afterschool, trying to impress his other gang members

But he lost the fight, and his gang had just left him.

Over the year he got stronger, and when he was nineteen he was a father.

He needed money, so he turned into a robber.

He started slanging drugs, and his gang had his back.

A rival gang stole the selling spot, and took all the cash.

He grabbed a gun and called his gang, he reacted too fast.

Shot poor Jimmy, twice in the head and once in the spine.

The police officers cuffed him. It was the end of the line.

He sat in the courtroom and thought of the things he regrets.

But it was too late. He was sentenced to death

He lay strapped to a bed, and stared the needle in the eye.

Death laughed crudely, while he lay there and cried.

**Pfffffffffttttt -- by Angel Saldivar**

*Author’s Note: I choose this poem because I feel that it is protesting a majority of what I personally thought needs to be fixed. I also think that it really sounds like me and catches my tone.*

America

Land of the free

Land of hypocrisy

Where we send sons & daughters

to fight for the problems

of the warlords in D.C.

So what separates us from them?

What separates our missiles from theirs?

Our bullets from theirs?

Our casualties from theirs?

The country founded on ideas of rights

Yet a double standard exist

Freedom of words is GIVEN to people

Who will not use it

Who gets to choose who can speak?

The warlords?

The country run by monkeys in suits

who will dance at the sign of a dollar?

We can obtain the right to “justify” murder

Yet it is wrong to watch a film like Mr. Moore's

We can't share ideas like him

It's “un-American” to oppose a government

Have the warlords disapproved all ideas?

OF COURSE NOT!

Just as long as you’re an O' Reilly or a Glenn Beck

Just as long as you'll defend

The man who signs your paycheck

Sure go ahead, promote murder

You call it what you please

Just remember

You can pee on our faces

Just don't tell us it's raining

**Violence -- by Jazminee Valdez**

*Author’s note: I chose this poem because violence is something that goes on everyday and everywhere.*

*No matter how hard we try to avoid them, they always find a way to get to us one way or another. We need to find a way to defeat violence without violence.*

No love and no pity

Nothing but hate and revenge  
The taste of vengeance and a smell of fear  
Bullets loaded, yet no one warned  
People screaming, Federals puzzled  
Children killing families  
Teens killing teens

National Ave. was where the murder was committed  
They found 6 shell casings on the scene  
Blood puddles flowing down the sidewalk  
Yellow tape surrounding my community  
Every day the sirens break the silence  
Screams penetrate every corner of my home  
Mothers crying  
Families incomplete   
Busy days at the cemetery  
boxes getting buried 6 feet deep  
The color red is supposed to mean love  
Instead it signifies blood  
Something our community is covered with  
What has the world come to?  
Who are the neighborhood heroes?  
Where is the safety?

Why doesn’t it stop?

**It’s all good -- by: Isaac Wong**

*Authors note: Prior to writing this poem, I had written a essay on Guantanamo Bay. I am strongly against the actions that occur in the Camp but at the same time I find it very necessary to stay around. I decided to go with a satire-ish poem for this one. Hope you enjoy.*

The Gitmo,

Gits mo,

People every day,

They get these people anyway,

So let’s gather them all around,

Stomp them into the ground,

And take away their rights,

But why stop there,

Let’s not give them a court,

Lets treat them as if their short,

And we are the tallest people on earth,

Like they are not people,

But animals to be controlled,

Now that we’ve done that,

Let’s go all the way,

They are animals,

So let’s treat them like one,

Let’s cage them up,

Make fun of them,

Abuse them,

And give them no voice,

Maybe they weren’t terrorists before,

But I’m sure as hell,

They will be one now.

**Silicon &Red Apples -- By Matt Castro**

*Author’s Note:**The modern world is full of people who are materialistic and shallow; only judging things by their appearance. My poem is about all those people who feel they have a necessity for certain objects that ascetically appeal to them, hence the shiny red apples and silicon implants.*

Hurried feet walk across the battered cement

All pointed in different directions

Looking for that special thing

That one special thing

It’s special because it’s a shiny red apple

or because it’s a pair of silicon implants

Faces are anxious and aggravated

Striving to get all that’s on their list

All that they want

All that they think they need

Because they’re a basket of shiny red apples

Or a pair of silicon implants

Limbs and fingers claw at clothing

Grab at goodies

Pick at products

And the only reason for the picking and the grabbing and the clawing

Is for a shiny red apple

Or a pair of silicon implants

**Gypsies – by Eva Novakova**

*Author’s note: I decided to write this poem because it was about the same thing as my essay. In my country, Slovakia, we have many gypsies and they’ve become people who are different than their past*

Dancing around fire

Red, orange, black, and yellow

Caravan wagons

Singing, laughing

Free spirits

Changes to

Dark, raggy clothes

Eating from garbage cans

Poor, no job

Many kids

No longer free

### Interpretation -- By Anna Walsh

*Author’s note: This poem can be interpreted in many different ways. For me writing this poem brought up many emotions, and I focused on my own perception of what the world has turned into. What has become normal in our modern world (for example poverty, money, mindlessness class and technology) how saddening it can be, and how wrong it is.*

I can look upon the weak

I can see the desperation in their eyes.

They are reaching towards me begging me.

The ones I love, so beautiful in their demise.

I can look upon the weak, knowing I am needed.

And all I do is turn my back, letting a world of people down lower than low.

But running away is all I can do. The motivation is gone, and I know it was never mine.

My life as a single entity, all I know, most of what I knew, was never mine.

I can look upon the weak, the broken, the pathetic, and yet I remain still.

To see this saddens me deeper than a bottomless pit.

Yet no tears run down my face

What more in my world could I ask for?

My world gives me all I need

Yet my indifference persists.

It persists because I need it to,

I need it too because when I do stop,

and when I do think

I cannot bear what I see

I am merely a part of a game,

a game I have been playing since a very young age

A game that cannot be outrun,

a game that obliterates any sign of resistance

A game more empty than my own apathy

A game that brings me what?

Money? A job?

I can look upon the weak

But my pitiful indifference makes me see right through them

I need this indifference

I rely heavily on it

It shields me.

If it were weak, if it were corrosive, evaded and broken

I would not have the ability to endure what I see now

And the tears would run deeply

My cheeks would glisten with the tangible evidence of my broken heart