



A SHIP OF POETS  
a WITS digital anthology



# A Ship of Poets

(Cover photo: "Turtles" by Nina Dietzel of Grant High School)



**LITERARY ARTS**

Writers in the Schools Online Chapbook



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Dear Reader,

We ask the poets, graphic novelists, playwrights, fiction and creative-nonfiction writers who work in the Writers in the Schools program to model the writing life. Many of our students have never met people who place writing at the center of their lives or who spend so much time searching for the right words.

During a WITS residency, students develop a writing habit. As one high school teacher put it, “the students developed a new awareness of the writing process, gained self esteem, and were willing to take more risks in their writing.” For professional writers, writing is revision. Each week WITS writers provide students with eagerly awaited written feedback, along with strategies to help students expand and revise their work.

WITS strengthens the literary communities within schools and beyond. In addition to coordinating 48 residencies and 10 author visits to schools, we coordinated 13 student readings attended by more than 650 people. Along with the digital chapbooks located on our blog W.o.o.t.s ( at <http://literary-arts.org/blogs/>), we publish a yearly print anthology, available for purchase in independent bookstores throughout Portland or for purchase here: <http://www.literary-arts.org/wits/anthology.php>.

This year WITS began providing tickets and transportation for students to attend Portland Arts and Lectures events at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Seventy-five students from Roosevelt High School attended Isabel Allende’s lecture. Afterward, one student remarked, “I learned that a great story involves the reader, and that good endings leave the audience with something to wonder about.” Another student wrote, “It was great. It was one of the best places I have ever gone. It was really amazing.”

Since WITS began in 1996, we have invested over \$2 million in our partner, Portland Public Schools. Our goal is to build relationships that last and grow over time.

We are committed to providing arts education even in these difficult economic times. Please visit [www.literary-arts.org/donate](http://www.literary-arts.org/donate) if you’d like to help by making a contribution to Writers in the Schools.

Mary Rechner

Writers in the Schools Program Director

# Connections

*Harris Dockins, Open Meadows*

Everything is built upon connections to connections  
And those connections are a rhythm meant for dancing  
These words themselves flow hand in hand  
Dancing a jig with the pages, the cover, the shelf, the floor, the building  
And flowing out into the streets, into the sewers, into the rivers  
Up into the sky, the dance plays with water and air, pinning them together  
The cloud is a party that must be shared and it knows it  
It falls upon the canopy of the trees into the ground and up through the roots  
The trees bear fruit and flower  
And feed the dance to those who partake in their delicacies  
The dance prances with the leaves of the trees and gains a new spunk  
Flying in its new fury it whips to a maelstrom  
Spinning faster and faster  
Taking all that it touches with  
Dancing faster and faster till finally exhausted  
Bringing the dance to the rebuilding  
The wood being brought in droves from the dancing forests  
Forming new buildings already dancing  
New floors full of the jitterbug  
A new shelf swinging to the Charleston  
The books' river dancing away  
And the words jump and slide around the page  
In some sort of crazed ritual dance.

# I am...

*Megan Bateman, Marshall High School*

I am a curly-haired woman who has four eyes  
And has developed a yapping noise

I am half- American half-British and quarter- Irish  
Half-bear half-hummingbird and quarter-hyena

I was born on December 17th  
In the winter of a ball game  
And I stopped at a store 3 days later  
In a place of new life and no sirens

I am old enough to fly my own dragon,  
I am developed in nature to see emotions  
And be sensible

I am the person who never quits  
And keeps treasures from the high seas

I am the one who heard the stories  
Of the hummingbird,  
Who has the ability to talk to objects  
Like people, just as the bear does.  
I'm addicted to meowing pills  
And to being happy and loved  
By my boy scout soldier

# The Color of My Wings

*Sydney Porter, Marshall High School*

On the last day of the water bearer's gaze upon the earth

I was born a bird from the sun.

A raven: black feathers against the blue sky,

gliding through the clouds,

and around the world

perched in the trees

and on fences.

The silent watcher: black feathers against grey cement.

I was born to the sky,

the splash of meaning spread through me

as I flew through a cloud full of words.

Now I am old enough

to know the workings of the world

but young enough

to still have some hope for it.

Don't judge me

by the color of my wings.

Under this black hood

is the soul of a rainbow-

colored butterfly.

Find the thunderstorm in my eyes

and the rainbow aftermath—

see me for who I am.

I am not hiding,

yet I'm hidden from view,

watching from above,

laughing in response.

I am a raven

with the soul of a rainbow-colored butterfly.

## Red Petals

*Melissa Ferguson, Benson Polytechnic*

A cold and winter day that rains red petals of white roses  
That flows to the river of my future  
Dreams that float away into space  
Tears that shed sadness

A cold winter day that rains red petals of white roses  
I see laughter that dries up anger  
I see smiles that defines words and deeds  
Hearing talk that is saying nothing  
Dreaming dreams that have no definite purpose  
Thoughts that are destructive  
Eyes that always stay closed  
Ears that always stay plunged

A cold winter day that rains red petals of white roses  
Pictures that shout out expressions  
Expressions that show no failure  
Light that is dark  
Darkness that is light

Movies that explain a book but not the importance of the words and meanings

A cold winter day that rains red petals of white roses

Failure may be the option to nothing that's important to life

But pushing your way through the acceptance of what important can get you a ticket of prosperity

Driving on the road that takes tow eyes two leg and two arms and a mind too...

Can only define the red petals of white roses of that winter rainy day.

# Feelings in the Dark

*Abdulkadir Osman, Wilson High School*

*When I was a boy, I used to fill my ears with poetry as if it were a whole ship of poets.*

With the advice of my parents and the poetry in my heart, I am able to understand people's feelings. You have to know when to help someone and how to understand their situation without questioning. It is a strong belief of mine that you must lock out the evilness in your heart by giving others your undivided attention. Never release the lock on the dark side. You must always share how you feel... otherwise the evilness within you will take over.

*Showing love is more important than money in your pocket.*

My family was so kind to me, teaching me that I can make a difference in the lives of others. There shouldn't be a wall between you and the world. You must talk and share to be a better person in this universe. But you must also listen...fill your ears with the thoughts and emotions of those around you...as if these feelings were a ship carrying the person you were looking for.

*Many lock their feelings in a dark room, because there is nobody to listen to them.*

Once the evil takes over their hearts, their minds won't understand their surroundings. All this violence is from corrupted hearts and minds of people. You will never understand unless you observe and listen. The helpful guidance from my parents and the preaching poets is what kept me succeeding in this suicidal universe. If you can't find peace in your heart, you can't find peace in the outside world.

*Don't let your feelings keep you away from understanding and finding kindness in your soul.*

## Last Name

*Michel Remigio [Bermudez], Marshall High School*

My second last name has left  
me like my mother did.  
Once a momma's boy  
now converted  
to a daddy's kid.  
Not by choice  
but by force  
like the Hmong with Christianity.

Bermudez is no longer  
real, except in my birth certificate.

# Reality is Dismissed

*Cameron Fish, Cleveland High School*

Just a roaring sound,  
Inflated by air  
People running all over the place  
So many bombs hit their targets

Inflated by air  
What are we supposed to do now?  
So many bombs hit their targets  
What *IS* newsworthy?

What are we supposed to do now?  
Bombs strike  
What *IS* newsworthy?  
A media unable to understand

Bombs strike  
People running all over the place  
A media unable to understand  
Just a roaring sound

# Hearts

*Mindi Gilbert, Roosevelt A&T*

I am the heart,  
That you broke.

I am the person,  
That's broken inside.

I am the floor,  
That you walked on.

I am the ceiling,  
That looks over you.

I am the desk,  
That you sit at.

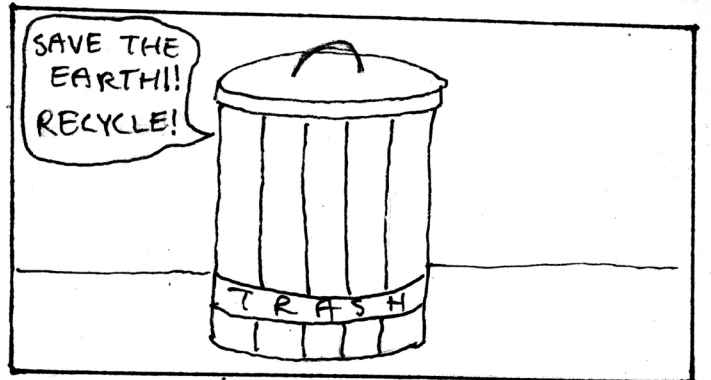
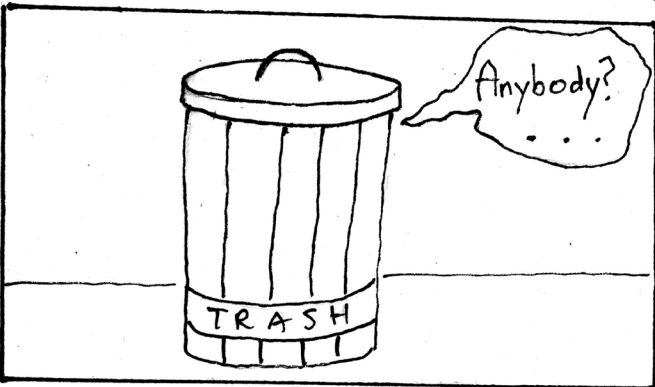
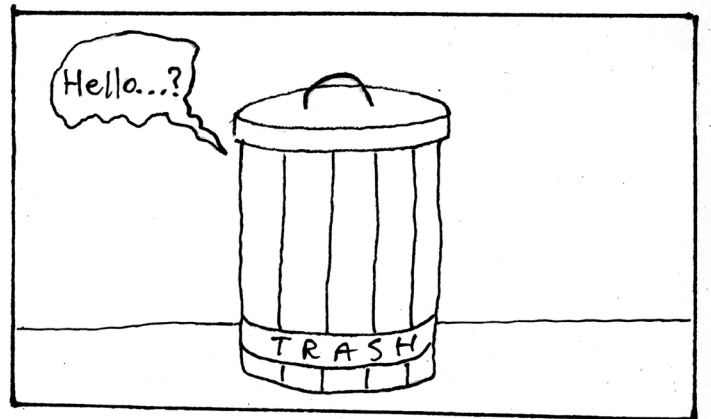
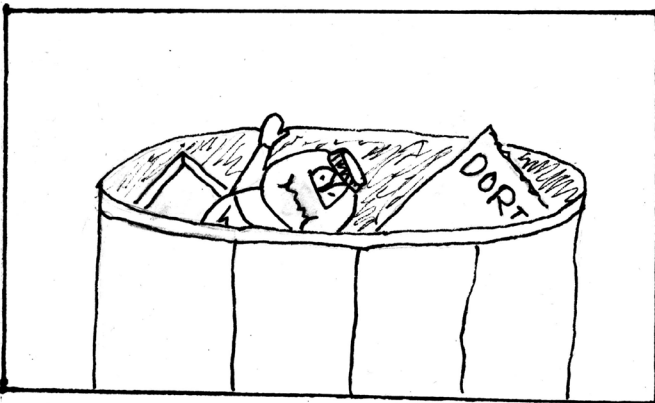
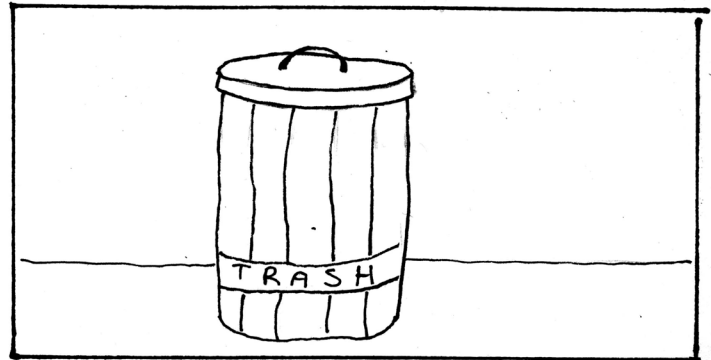
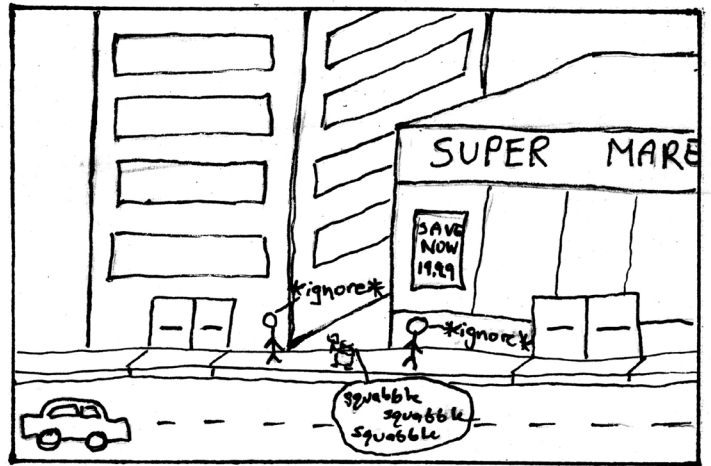
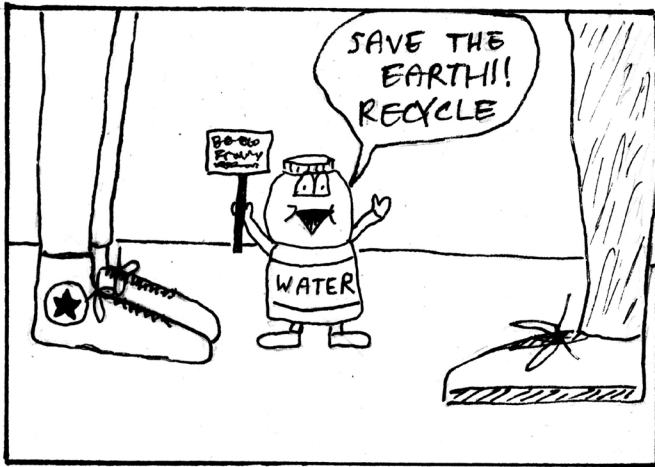
I am the paper,  
That you actually wrote.

I am the question mark,  
On the paper,

Cause a question mark  
Is just half a heart.

# Save the Earth

Hans Lee



## Mutual

*Bronson Entz, Open Meadows*

I can make me happy. You can make me happier. You can make me laugh. I can give you a smile. In the cold I will give you my coat just as long as you say thanks. I'll give you what the last man didn't as long as you give me what the last woman wouldn't. You're way too beautiful! When I see you I don't want to blink. When I do I hope to fall asleep and see you again. I hope that you feel the same way. You are deep in my heart like the bottom of an ocean. You're my treasure. My feelings for you are immeasurable. Our relationship is bitter sweet. I just want to help secure you. I hope that we can identify optimism in our souls. The pessimism will only break us apart. I hope we can make a mutual connection and kill depression.

## Race Speak: A Conversation Between Two Fans

*Cora Veltman, Wilson High School*

Announcer: "Miller gets Quick time! (1)"

Fan1: "you think he'll get the pole? (2)"

Fan2: "nah, they draw an invert. (3) It can be 0, 2, 4, or 6. They do that so there is no sandbagging. (4)"

Fan1: "So I guess that we will just have to wait and see"

Fan2: "In the mean time here's another class (5) coming out for their trophy dash."

Fan1: "do you think that Nichols will get his car together before the next race?"

Fan2: "I don't know that car looked pretty busted, it looked like a pile of scrap metal. He might be out till' next season, has to get a new Chassis, (6) new engine, new everything. That car was Tore UP!"

Fan1: "look these guys on the track they are really flying!"

Fan2: "check out the guy in 4th! He's all over the place. (7)"

Fan1: did you see the squirrely (8) move that he just pulled?"

Announcer: "And it will be Margeson that takes the checkered! That's it for the Midgets! (9), next will be the Dwarf's (10) trophy dash! (11)"

### Key:

1. QuickTime: in qualifying, the person that set the fastest time.
2. Pole position: car that will start in the first position.
3. Car inverts: a line up procedure to make sure the fastest cars don't dominate.
4. Sandbagging: is 'cheating' buy concealing your full power, so you start in the front row?
5. Classes: different types of cars
6. chassis: the main frame/ structure or 'shell' of the car
7. all over the place: referring to the cars position on the track
8. Squirrely: the term that my family created describing how out of control a car seems.
9. Midgets: a type of car
10. Dwarfs: another class of car
11. Trophy dash: a small race between the fastest cars per class. The winner is known to receive a trophy and a picture with the trophy girl.

# Turning Back Time

*Joshua Howe, Open Meadows*

People who die  
rise once again,  
bombs that fall  
climb into the belly of the beast,  
dragons fly once again  
when I turn back time,

Pollution would stop  
the ozone will fill in  
fish will return  
to their watery depths,  
bullets of war  
will return to the gun  
when I turn back time,

diseases heal  
patients revive,  
trees that fall  
will rise once again,  
gangs will split up  
crime stops,  
when I turn back time,

guns dissolve  
leaving dust in their place,  
evil hides once again  
good takes over,

peace on the world  
love returned,  
turning back time I have.

## The mind is a beautiful thing

*Quenton Appelo, Marshall High School*

Through open doors unseen by the naked eye, a mysterious man wanders for love when he finds his world too filled with nothing other than robots in disguise. He is unconsciously lonely then consciously alone. So many lost minds: too many spoiled men, women, and children. Their moments never seem to last, they take a glance, look onward and forget that split-second is just an image from the past. Why can't love remember its self?

Oh, how I wish I could love my self, oh how I wish people would just be them selves. None other than stumbling dreams lost in the dark, lost in space, a pointless worry, a meaningless self's contemplation. Just a bunch of empty figures walking mindlessly into the future, nothing more than unfinished paintings hanging in the sky. They hang but no one knows why.

# At heart

*Emar Rodarte, Marshall High School*

## I

... am a proud fool who  
strives to balance  
the apex of turbulence  
upon the edge of contradiction.

... was born of the fruits  
from the deserts & jungles  
on the day & in the city  
of angels, beneath  
the lion's watchful eye,  
between the heart's light  
of the sun & moon.

... can be the rock  
that sits in the river  
letting everything flow past,  
or the beast that rages forth  
consuming the beaten path  
leaving the storm in its wake.

... am as old  
as my memories are deep  
& my thoughts vast  
and though they may be few  
and far between, when  
I decide to do something,  
I do it.

... love more than anything  
the pursuit of happiness  
and moments of peace  
between life long struggles.





LITERARY ARTS

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