

## **Descriptions: Dramatic Interpretation**

### **1. As She Fades Away**

A mother recounts the choices that she made and wishes that she could change to have a stronger connection with her daughter. As a young woman gives up her life and her goals when she finds out she is pregnant, she puts all her life's goals into her child. But she soon sees herself forcing the life she thought she would live on her child. We find that sometimes we live for a time that is not always promised to us and a reality that we may never live to see. When basketball becomes the only way of communication who will rise a mother or a player? Finally, during watching a game, yelling in support, yelling at her daughter, she watches her child who wants nothing more than to make her happy stop and fall. Will this mother lose her greatest gift on the court, or will she be able to realize that she cannot live her life through her child. As she takes a final shot and watches her daughter fade away.

### **2. First Sunday In December**

All families have their traditions; this Hispanic family is no different. For this family it is sharing family stories of life and struggle on the First Sunday in December sitting in the kitchen as they all make tamales. When a mother must accept the secrets of her son, she realizes that their Sunday sessions were not only a source of their love but also something that he cherished in his life. We see the strength in a woman and in a mother as she addresses change and life that she does not have a recipe for.

### **3. An Understanding of Hate**

Known for being one of the most powerful rulers in history, everyone knows the name of Hitler and has learned of the reign of terror that he poured over Germany and neighboring countries. In many instances in history, we want to know "Why?" Why was he the way he was? Why did he do the things that he did and how could he become such a wrath? From his own words we will see a side of Hitler that shows us that sometimes the most intricate of questions can be answered if they are just simply asked. Questions will be answered. (Fiction, fanfare)

### **4. Judgment Day**

In 2013 the country watched the trial of a man that was accused of murdering teenager Trayvon Martin. As the trial unravels, we saw his mother stoic in the courtroom daily holding in all emotion and never losing her control. On the *Judgment Day* we see her preparing to head to the courtroom for the jury's final decision. As we watch and listen to her preparations, we realize how difficult it is to know the outcome of someone else's reality. And accept that no matter the situation no parent should have to bury their child amid a senseless and preventable situation. (Fiction, fanfare)

## **5. 72 Hours**

This follows Melissa, a mother, who shares with us the details of her son's abduction. Through her story we want nothing more than to help her to get him back. For this mother the loss of her child is what we could expect it to be, but to hear the story and live it through her, the story sits on our hearts. It is more than just the new story, it is real, it is her life, and it is a beautiful story of finding the inner strength to turn the page. She finds the strength to walk us through the first 72 Hours of her missing son. Will he be found? Or will 72 Hours turn into a lifetime?

## **6. Dancing Without Words**

In *Dancing Without Words*, we see a young man who loves to dance. But we soon find out that his dancing is the best way for him to communicate. He has a stutter that he does not want to explain that has stolen his voice. He avoided speaking to avoid the eyes of strangers judging him, he would much rather live in his own silence. But as he struggles to find the strength for the words, he will have to soon face the reality that some things are better left unsaid, and others must be shared to give him freedom. In the dramatic action he looks himself in the face, addresses his past so that he can grow with freedom in his future. Through it all we find out that sometimes speaking isn't the best form of telling a beautiful story.

## **7. Scars**

In our overwhelming search for physical perfection, we see the lengths a woman is willing to go to be the Duchess she believes she deserves to be. To stand in her own reflection and never not be able to see the beauty that is there. Instead, she keeps covering her face with more and more surgery. However, when the vision that she has in her mind can't be matched in the mirror; she finds herself in an ever-changing world where she must accept that beauty is more than skin deep.

## **8. Sole**

Legend Gregory Hines touched the lives of millions and is hailed as one of the most prolific tap dancers of all time. In the midst of his untimely death, we miss his smile, his personality but most of all the sound that he was able to make with his tap shoes. Even during the most successful of life experiences Mr. Hines shares with us the struggle of being the man that wears these shoes. Not only do they make a beautiful sound but they captivate all his emotion and soul. In this fictional story we hear his heart speak about his love for dance and life. A story told in respect and remembrance for a life that changed dance and lives. (Fiction, fanfare)

## **9. Seeing You Again**

Love seems to be an emotion that we all search for and if we are lucky enough to find that one person, we want to hold on to them for a lifetime, such is this story. A woman

must speak at her husband's funeral and during her remembering his life she finds herself lost in sharing her deepest secrets with the people that love them the most. She reminisces and shares the best of times and the worst of times. When she tells the audience that they both suffered from AIDS she must fight through the tears to tell the story. Why did she stay with him? How did it all unfold? In the end she loved him despite, and it is truly a beautiful story of love and a marriage that stood the test of many challenges.

## **10. The Cold**

There is nothing more important in life than the relationship between mother and child. The expectation is that our mother will create comfort and a safety net that cannot be broken but for him it is a net that was never cast over him. When his mother uses the words of the Bible as a reason for the poor way that she treats him he must turn to himself for strength. In the midst of his life, he must truly search himself to see if this life of abuse is better than what he would have on the streets. For him being outside in The Cold might be a better decision.

## **11. Floating on Katrina**

In preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Katrina a teacher shows his dedication to his students by doing whatever is necessary to save them. Even if this takes him to a place that is unfamiliar to him, never turning his back on his students is the most important thing. As he fights for his life and the life of one of his students we see inside the true essence of his man and his ability to never leave a student behind.

## **12. The Touch of Water**

Natalie is a woman who is struggling with the things in her head. The things that are telling her that what she wants is what is real. She continues to listen to the voices and not live in the reality of the situation. She falls in love with the man of her dreams. She loves him, worships him, and stalks him but fights with the idea that he may not love her back and the fact that he doesn't even know who she is. How can he not love her? How can she accept this to be true? As she confronts him about their nonexistent love, we watch her fall farther and farther from reality. This is a dangerous love, violent and unstable. But that's what love tends to be sometimes right?

## **13. \*\*\*The Row (Currently under edits and not for sale)**

An African American man on the countdown to his last breath on earth takes the time to share with us how he got where he is, how he feels and has come to terms with his sentence. Through the stories that he tells we find out that sitting on The Row can change him for the better or at least bring him to a point of contentment before he makes his last walk.

#### **14. My Mother's Call**

In My Mother's Call we follow a woman as she desperately tries to connect with her mother during one of the worst storms of her life, and one of the most devastating storms in Oklahoma history. When you are miles away and the only connection you can count on is gone how does she hold on to her mother? We find that sometimes that the worst feeling can sometimes be something as simple as losing connection. A connection that could be the last connection we have. We will never forget.

#### **15. A Trial of Faith**

A Trial of Faith deals with a minister who is faced with one of the most difficult losses of his life. When he loses his family, his faith is challenged. For him it is a question of everything that has become his life, for us it is the pain of a man that in an instant lost all he knew and loved. Will he be able to hold on to the hand of the man that he feels has brought him through it all or will he fall to the pain of his loss?

#### **16. All Jokes Aside**

A comedian shows us how you can climb your way to the top but staying there is, at times, out of the hands of his hands. As he struggles to get his hands back on the microphone he must first ask for help and support to stand-alone again. He soon learns that the support of a mother can take you where you want to be even if he never thought he'd make his way back...home.

#### **17. Disordering**

An African American man struggles with the voices in his head and the fact that no one around him will assist. What do you do as a child when you know that something is wrong with you, but no one is listening, no one hears, and no one seems to care to help you get better. In this midst of his disorder his screams for help are finally heard, but is it too late or right on time?

#### **18. Jury of One**

During one of the most historical missing person cases in American History we see Terry Probyn, mother of Jaycee Dugard, reflecting on her life and how this experience has changed her. The loss of a child is one of the worst feelings in a lifetime, but when she is returned to her are they able to reconnect and move forward or does the experience scar her little girl for the rest of her life? (Fiction)

#### **19. My Baby and Me**

The legend of Jimi Hendrix and the sadness of his early death is one that haunts music lovers around the world. He affected the lives of many in the short amount of time that he shared his music with us. In its simplest form he was a son and a brother and a music

legend. In the life of all young artist that die much too young his life and death are explored and the inner thoughts of his demons come to light. (Fiction, fanfare)

## **20. Seventh Birthday**

On the seventh birthday of his daughter, an African American father makes a split-second decision that changes his life forever. A quick run into the store has him returning to an empty car that once held his most prize possession, his daughter. The worst feeling for this father is blame. As he continues to blame himself for her disappearance the worst-case scenario becomes a reality. In the death of this baby girl, he is inconsolable. But when faced with the pain that is ever growing, he decides to engage in the one thing that he believes will make him feel better, revenge.

## **21. Clothing Optional**

A woman shares with the audience her life and her lifestyle. As she opens about where she has been and exactly how she got there we begin to realize that within the life of this woman's story there is a special strength that makes us care about her. She proves to be a woman of honor, though through her life experiences she has been judged, chastised, and demeaned. She stood up, collected her life, and put it back on track. She overcame her past to recreate her history. She is the best example of change, and success being something that anyone may accomplish with the right amount of support, and self-love.

## **22. School of Innocence**

Heather is the typical high school teenage girl. She has friends, classes and her first crush, her teacher. Unfortunately for Heather the crush that she has turns into an emotional roller coaster that she is not ready to ride on. She soon loses her grip on reality and finds herself spiraling out of control because all she wants is to be loved by the man that she believes is the love of her life. When this love is professed and denied Heather does not have the emotional balance to deal with the denial. People often wonder how school shootings start; sometimes they start at a broken heart. It has been said that there is nothing like a woman scorned, in School of Innocence this saying stands very true.

## **23. Trials of Manhood**

The story of a fun-loving man that is in a retirement home addresses the audience about the day that his wife was attacked and passed away in his arms. He is full of energy and as people we feel for him and his story and where life has put him. Sometimes there are great people in not-so-great places, and we wonder why or how this happened to him. In accordance with this story life can truly change in a split second. And in that second everything that he knew to be true and right changed when he and his son watched his wife's life slip away. But he also shows us

hope for his future, and with this hope we can smile at what he sees as a future that is not wrapped up in the past.

#### **24. Gaining Altitude**

Anthony is a man who is full of life. He is a flight attendant, and he feels his way of making the world a better place is by putting a smile on the faces of the passengers of his flights. Through his story of joy, we see how satisfying others he is how makes himself feel accepted by the people in his world. The people that come and go in a matter of hours have the power to justify his place in this world. With the history with his parents at the core of his inability to keep his feet on the ground we get to see this amazing person at his most intimate moments. He shares with us why he flies, why his father hated him, why his mother was his reason for breathing and how sometimes running away is the only thing people know to do.

#### **25. I Raise My Fist**

The story of a woman who grew up in a time when it was not safe to be black. In a time whereas a black person you have to choose to be pro violence or anti violence, but you had to believe in something. And in a time where every black person is fighting for the same thing- equality. She has decided, due to circumstance to become a member of the Black Panther party. She is a strong woman, with a history of violence from her mother. But the Black Panthers saved her and taught her how to be strong and strive for something better. When she decides to come face to face with her demons, she finds that when you fight, sometimes you will find yourself on the losing side, behind prison walls watching the world change around you. But through all of the years she is able to see change happen, things get better for the black race that she so passionately fought for.

#### **26. The Hand We're Dealt**

This is the story of an African American mother who was brought up by a strong woman that taught her that the most important part of motherhood is being a mother, first, last, and always. This is challenged when her third child has complications at birth and ends up in a wheelchair. While she accepts her situation and circumstance, she soon realizes that the strength she possesses is not one that is innate in all parents. After her husband gives up his parental rights to all three of the children, she finds out just how strong she must be to be the mother she knows she can be. Finally, she can look at the cards she was dealt and accept that this is her life for a reason and no matter what the challenge she will continue to be a wonderful mother because that is what she knows to be.

#### **27. Mural**

Nika is a Hispanic woman and an artist of sorts. She is actually a tagger; she finds the perfect building to do her kind of art on and she makes magic happen. Though this is

not the typical idea of art it is what makes her life make sense. A product of the foster care system she finds herself standing in front of the building where she spent her summers in an after-school program learning how to paint. The colors are her connection to a life that was not very good to her and not very forgiving. It is an emotional reunion; with the doors locked and chained and the building closed all she has are her memories of what it was like to grow up with one love, her paint and paintbrush. She shares with us her creations, tells us what she sees, what we should see and how the Mural is the perfect mix of color, life, and breath. It is much more than just graffiti, it is telling a story, her story.

## **28. Beyond Black**

Patrice is an African American woman that is during dealing with the demons that have haunted her most of her life. As a black woman who does not trust her own race and she is now at a crossroads in her life. As she travels to visit her father in prison she reflects on her life. Why does she feel this way about black people? She must first look inside her past before she can walk into her present situation and find her inner freedom. Through her stories of abuse, we begin to understand why she is living in fear of the one thing that she is most, black. A product of circumstance she finally can see her life for what it has been and could be. She must look beyond the black, or white and find what she is missing most, truth for her to breathe.

## **29. Flick of The Wrist**

In the fashion of a fairytale, we meet Mally a woman with special powers. She talks of the choices she has made and the ways in which she has chosen to use her powers for negative things. It is not until she shares with us why she does what she does that we realize that not only so choices have consequences but also sometimes those consequences' can change the course of your life forever. Mally is living in a sleepless, dreamless world. It is through her description of her dreamless life that perspective is gained on exactly how important dreams can be. She finally shares with us her greatest life defeat and how when you lose what you want most nothing else matters. And it is in the loss of what she wants most that takes away her ability to feel. Until she sees her dreams in real life in the form of her watching a child get off the bus. She is changed. Though she has powers she cannot find her happiness in magic, or in the flick of the wrist, sometimes you just must live.

## **30. To Be Free**

Shukura is a strong woman who is living in Namibia, Africa. What she dreams of is simple, to have the freedom to medicine that Americans have. As she recounts watching each one of her siblings and both parents die of diseases or circumstances that in America are seemingly simple situations, we see the essence of who she is. She is a fighter, a daughter, a sister, and a leader. She is passionate about her survival but shares her view of the "American dream" in her eyes with a joy that

makes us realize how appreciative we should be of the simple things in life like medicine and clean water. This piece leaves you wondering how many people are living like this. Shukura asks the question of changing shoes with us, wondering how many of us would switch places with her, no one. She does not feel sorry for her situation, she is a fighter. She shares her story with us as if we are a part of her family, she laughs, she sings and she prays for change.

### **31. Junkie**

Junkie is coming of age story of a boy who becomes a man of addiction. In the shadow of his brother, he starts with pills and evolves to meth. During his meth addiction his family tries to hide him away, but soon realizes that you can't hide addiction. After stealing, overdosing, fighting, and spiraling out of control he finds himself tweaking and staring down the barrel of a police officer's gun. He fires, the police officer dies, and Jeremiah finds himself on trial for murder. By the end of the trial, he realizes that he will forever be an addict, and recovery is truly day-to-day.

### **32. Willing to Die**

Janet is a mother who is standing front and center delivering the speech of her life, for the life of her daughter. Janet's daughter is dying of Wilson's disease, a disease that takes over your liver. She needs a liver transplant to save her life. Unfortunately, the only way she can donate her liver is if she is dead, but the hospital will not kill her to take her liver for the transplant. Her last effort is to stand before the senate to ask permission to die for the life of her daughter. Like any parent she is not willing to stop.

### **33. Moments of Memory**

Katherine Elliot is one of the most spectacular stage actresses of her time. She has recently been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and is trying to make sense of her life. She is devastated that she can no longer remember the simple things in life and the most precious thing, the words of the plays that she has performed in. Her dream is to one-day play lady Macbeth but through the performance we see that though disease is taking away her memories she is not going to let it take her life without a fight. And maybe, just possibly she will pick up a script and be able to look at the famed words of Lady Macbeth and make them come to life, if only for this moment in time.

### **34. Always Standing Never Falling**

Oscar is not just a teacher; he is an amazing teacher. He loves teaching his students and this job is what he always knew he would grow up to be. After getting a few years under his belt the administration walks down to his room one day and escorts him off campus. With one box to show for his years of dedication he is forced to look back at his students that he influenced and give up or fight. Oscar works at a Catholic school that has fired him because they found out he married his male



partner; this is not allowed. But before he could decide what his next step is, he gets word that his students are protesting his termination. He joins them in the fight, and we find that the love that a teacher has for his students is shown in the actions that they take to save his job and to stand up for what they believe is right.

### **35. Who Thought Yolanda Was a Good Name?**

Yasi is a young woman living with her family in a village in the Philippines. On the morning of Hurricane Yolanda Yasi recounts the days' events leading up to the start of the rain that develops into one of the worst hurricanes in the history of the world. She talks of her family structure and the strength of the people of her village that survived and those that sadly didn't. Slowly coming to accept that she is the only survivor of her family she must figure out how to put the pieces back together, accept this reality of the situation and find the strength to move forward. Because she is a fighter, she weathers the storm and lives up to the expectations that her parents had for her, "Be strong alone before you share your strength with others."

### **36. Creating Art**

Stacy is a troubled young woman who has yet to experience love in her life. Her parents have made it very clear to her that she was the worst accident of their life. She stopped looking for love from them and started hating herself. Amid Stacy trying to figure out why her life is so terrible she begins to cut herself so that she can feel something again. It starts out with small cuts hoping to be able to hide her new addiction but as her life spirals the cuts get bigger and she begins to believe that the color of blood is her way of creating art. For her it is the most beautiful creation on earth, she is loved. She eventually finds herself in a place where she is getting help but still saddened when she stands naked in the mirror with all the lifelong memories of the art she created.

### **37. Integrating Stuttgart, Arkansas 1963: My Mother's Story**

An older African American woman recounts her life growing up in the 1960's in the racist south. She tells this story to her daughter who accidentally sees a series of scars on her back and inquires where they came from. Her mother reverts to her teenage years of the Civil Rights Movement and the night that her friends decided to do their part and integrate the "White Park." The night was planned out with parent knowledge and assistance and during them trying to do the right thing a lot of bad things happened to them. She shares her story as vividly as it was on the day that it happened. Through her eyes her daughter was able to see what her mother was willing to go through so that she would never be treated as anything but an equal.

### **38. The Path to Heaven**

Marlo is a troubled young woman. At a young age she was diagnosed with schizophrenia and multiple personality disorder, a difficult combination to treat and

especially to live with. But after her parents have her committed; she begins to experience a balance in her life that she had never experienced before. She moves out of the facility and into her own apartment, gets a job, begins dating and is living a normal life. Soon Marlo finds out she is pregnant. After giving birth to her perfect daughter Heaven, Marlo decides that she no longer needs her medication. Shortly after she flushes her medications, she begins to hear a series of voices and as time passes the voices get louder and louder. They have been quiet for too long. She tries to fight the voices, but they eventually overcome her, and she ends the life of the one great gift she was given, Heaven.

### **39. Beautiful Brown Babies**

“Brown Babies” is a term used to identify children that were born to African American soldiers and German women during the World War II. They were unwanted and forgotten children that no country wanted. In this story a woman shares with her daughter how and when she found out about her mother. Her father was a war vet who snuck her into the country and raised her himself. She never knew about her mother but when she finally asked, he told her all about the circumstances that brought her to America and away from her. It is an emotional reflection of a woman that is both African American and German and learning the truth about who she is.

### **40. Love of Terror**

Natalie is a single woman remembering how it is that she ended up single and pregnant. She is a woman who, from her fiancé, was a victim of domestic violence. A man that said that he loved her more than life itself and she believed him. The hits came nonstop, and the apologies always followed. Natalie forgot who she was and turned into who he made her, a shell of a woman that she did not like being. She somehow found the strength to leave him, but now she lives in constant fear. He wouldn't let her go. Showing up at her house, her job and when she found out she was pregnant she had to protect her baby, so she went into hiding. She is daily looking over her shoulder, waiting, praying that he won't find her. During doing what is right for herself and her child she must ask herself, “What will I tell my child about her father?”

### **41. The Story of Daddy**

Being a single father is as much of a struggle as being a single mother. For this single father of two little girls living without his wife has been one of the most difficult things to accept in life. After his wife dies unexpectedly while he is at work and his little girls are home with her for the day until he realizes something is wrong and comes home to find her laying on the floor in the kitchen with a blanket over her, because her daughter thought, “Mommy's sleeping.” He finds the strength to pick up his daughters and continue to move forward as his wife would have wanted him to.

He has a strength in him that allows him to never forget his wife's memory, but he also has a love about him for her that is passionate and touching.

#### **42. Love: From Child to 80**

There is nothing better than knowing the person you are with is the person you want to spend the rest of your life with. For this man he found and married the love of his life. They meant in first grade and never looked back, and their joke was always that they would live to celebrate their eightieth wedding anniversary. Unfortunately, life happens to them and Amber, his wife, slips and falls in the bathroom and is rushed to the hospital to find out that she has a brain tumor. As he prepares to let her go her recounts his life with her and shares the terror, he is feeling just thinking about living life without his love. Told from his perspective we see that even the most amazing love can come to a tragic end, but they are never forgotten.

#### **43. One More Drink**

Blake Taylor is a young man with a lot of demons. On the backside of being released from prison he finds himself unable to cope with the world that he is now living in. He cannot stop his mind from dreaming, remembering about all of those years he spent in jail, so he searches for something to allow him to escape. He finds his freedom in a bottle of alcohol. Blake loses himself lost in the bottom of a bottle. The effects of the liquor are taking a toll on his body and his mind. He begins to have seizures, blackouts, and rising blood pressure. Is there anything that can make him stop drinking? Is there any way that he would ever stop drinking, even to save his own life? Sadly, within the performance Blake sees his own death. His spirit lives through it, and now Blake is ready to be free. The scene ends with him finally becoming clean and sober.

#### **44. Sober Too Late**

There are some life choices that we all wish we could change. For this man he wishes that he could change the day he decided to take his first drink. Starting in college with a few beers and evolving to whiskey in the real world he knows that he has a problem but doesn't know how bad it truly is. After so many years of drinking he gets the diagnoses that his liver is failing and he needs to stop drinking, nothing changes. His wife Miranda finally tells him that she is leaving with their son Jake. It is on this day that he makes the choice that will forever be imprinted in his mind. After he takes Jake on a drunken car ride, he crashes into a wall and Jake doesn't make it. Now in prison and sober, he will never forget his son's face, his laugh, or any of the things that he did while he was drunk, including kill him. The one thing that he clings to is his sobriety pen. It is his friend and family. It is the one thing that he knows will always remind him that he can choose to be better than the man he used to be. He can win, he can be sober.

#### **45. Definition of Justice**

Officer Jake Lacey recounts the crimes that he has experienced as a police officer. Starting out his life with a few traumatic losses, becoming a police officer was his life's goal. He achieved it and excelled, until one night while on patrol a criminal gets away with murder. The circumstances of this crime change Officer Lacey forever. He decides that if the system doesn't get it right, he will. Lacey turns into a vigilante giving justice to families that deserve it and becoming a serial killer in a uniform. Though he believes that what he is doing is justified, the weight of the deaths that have been at his hands begins to weigh on him. Finally, everything comes to a halt when someone that he cares about gets in the way of his justice. He loses the last piece of control that he has. Now, from his prison cell, he speaks to us about who he is, who he was and what his last words will be.

#### **46. Mi Familia**

Yalaina Valdez is a young woman growing up in Mexico. She is popular and has a strong family. One day at school one of her classmates comes to her begging her to take money in exchange for the life of her father. Yalaina did not know what was happening. But she was soon forced to see her family for what they were and not what was being presented to her. After confronting her father, she soon realizes that her family is during the Mexican drug cartel. She is faced with the choice of being a part of the family business or walking away from all of the people she has loved the most in her life and start in a different country as a different person. Will she decide for a new start or a life of dangerous crime?

#### **47. A Private Note**

Mark is a wonderful husband who has a seemingly perfect life. He has lived his life through a series of notes. Notes from his life, notes from his wife and notes that he has written to himself as reminders of his experiences. He keeps them so that he can reflect on the best and worst times of his life. But when his wife tells him that she is unexpectedly pregnant he changes from a perfect husband to a despondent stranger. Living separate lives, he shuts his wife and child off from his world and reverts to his thoughts and his notes for sanity. Through his story we learn that even in the most perfect of relationships can change with the addition of a child. Is it the child that makes Mark turn his back on his family or it is something more? Secrets are revealed, and lives are forever changed. In the end it takes *A Private Note* to understand why Mark has done what he has done and to feel empathy for his situation.

#### **48. The Color of Fire**

Allison is a woman in a state of shock and depression as she recounts of the death of her children. She is fascinated with the beauty of fire, the colors and the power that fire has. As she shares her story on the day that she witnessed her the fire engulfs

children that she now obsesses over, we see what was a wonderful woman and mother transform into what this loss has made her. Her children were her life and now that they are gone her life, is gone. She feels that she has no reason to live. No strength to get out of bed in the morning and no purpose in life. But as she talks about her children, we can see the joy that they brought her. We can hear their laughter; her pictures are so colorful that as she tells the story the smell of smoke is almost present.

#### **49. The Weight of Beauty**

The story of a teenage girl that is the daughter of a beauty queen. Growing up in that situation she finds herself addicted to her own self-image. The more she looks in the mirror the more she sees a fat girl standing in front of her. Even in her worst moment of weighing only sixty pounds she was still working out for hours and eventually got to the crossroads of not being able to live because she was slowly killing herself. Finally, she ends up passed out on the floor unable to cry for help but in that moment, she finally sees herself. Her mother gets her into a treatment program that forces her to gain weight while assisting her to understand her thoughts. The scene ends much how it began with her standing naked in the mirror, except this time she sees the beauty that everyone else always saw in her. She is on the road to recovery.

#### **50. Deep Cuts**

Set in Mexico we see the story of a man who is a killer. He tells us the stories of how it came to be that he began killing. His tool of choice is a very sharp knife. He wasn't always a killer. His history is an interesting one. He was a good kid growing up in a bad world around him. The drug cartel had taken over their world and there was nothing that their families could do. His life changing memory was the day his little brother was gunned down by the cartel. He was never the same. So, he picked up and knife and swore to kill every cartel member that he could It gave him a sense of life again. The community was being rewarded with every murder he committed, but when he gets tired and decides to turn himself into the police, he meets the woman who will become the love of his life. Can he change for her, or will she eventually find out who he is and what he's done?

#### **51. Stuck**

The story of a young man who is dead as he tells the story, the audience does NOT know this until much later in the performance. He shares with us his memories of his father and his mother. How they were the most amazing people that he knew, and their lives were great. Until one day they sit him down to tell him that the mother has been diagnosed with stage four cancer. She soon passes away and his father soon transforms into a man that he doesn't even know anymore. The father is not the man that he used to be, and he never really gets over his wife's death, he never sees the dad that he knew again. On the two-year anniversary of the death of

his mother the son decides to kill himself. In death he can be with his mom, which is better than the life that he is living right now. Which is why he is where he is, stuck as a ghost in his house. As he struggles to find his freedom, he realizes that to free his father from his pain and guilt is to free all of them.

## **52. In the Office**

The time has come in American history for our first Hispanic President of the United States. He sits at his desk in the oval office trying to figure out how to start his speech. What words does he use to express to the American people the kind of President he will be? Before he can move forward with his speech he has to go back and tell the story of his immigrant parents and how they made it to America. Everything that they did to make sure that their family would be safe in a place where dreams are possible. They worked multiple jobs to provide for him and in the end, he did everything that he set out to do. It is a coming-of-age story that tells us that sometimes looking back is the best way to clearly see what is in front of you. The scene ends with him writing his first words of his speech. It is magical, forever changing history.

## **53. Living Without Life**

There is nothing better than being, "Daddy's little girl," but for this man being a father is the most important thing in his life. When his wife finds out that she is pregnant he seems to be just as excited as she is. He didn't miss an appointment and he even named her. But as quickly as he was blessed with her, she was taken away when his wife is in a car accident. His wife survived, but his baby did not. He never recovered from the loss. His wife stayed by his side and tried everything she could to assist him in his recovery, but he felt as if there was no way he was coming out of his whole, a whole that was filled with meth. He falls deeper and deeper into his meth addiction and is unable to pull himself out. Not even when his wife tells him that she is pregnant again, the news of a new child does not bring him out of his mourning for the first. When his wife dies in childbirth, he finally gets clean, for the moment. In the end we realize he is in the psych ward of a hospital suffering from a breakdown when he got high and threw his son outside in the cold and he died from hyperthermia. A crushing story of a series of bad situations that he made bad choices about dealing with.

## **54. Honor in Darkness**

Jamie stands at a podium giving a very passionate speech about why she created an organization that assists military men and woman who have been victims of sexual or physical abuse. She goes into a very detailed account of being stationed in Afghanistan and being assaulted on base. It is a passionate cry for help and the longing of people who are in her position wanting nothing more than to be heard. The importance of someone giving you his or her ear without assumption of the situation. Sometimes all we all want is someone to listen. In the end all she wants is

for people to understand that this does happen, but it is not a bad military, it is a few bad people that make this a reality. Still a proud member of the US armed forces she reminds every person in the room that she would gladly serve her country for the rest of her life.

### **55. Redefining Reflection**

Shannon is a woman suffering from physical abuse from her boyfriend Kevin. She tells us the story of how she met him. She was on a ride along with the police and he was arrested. As they sat in the back seat together, he made her feel like he was the one. Shannon fell for it. She allowed this ex-con to negatively affect her life. The abuse starts soon after the relationship starts, and Shannon can't get out. Rather, she can get out, but she doesn't know how. Her father tried to help her, but Shannon kept listening to the wrong person. She looks in the mirror and sees a reflection that no longer means anything to her. In the end she snaps and kills Kevin and, on this day, the first day of her trial, she tries to accept her fate realizing that she never had the courage to call the police but now she is about to stand and be judged for a reality that no one knew existed.

### **56. Special Kind of Special**

The story of a high functioning autistic teenage boy. Math is his specialty; he can solve any math problem thrown his way. As much as he is autistic, he loves math and can communicate with people. He attends school where some students bully him including his brother. When he is beat up at school because he wouldn't do someone's homework his brother Sonny stands by and allows it to happen. He breaks away and wonders home bloody and makes a life altering decision. He doesn't have the capacity to make this make sense. He decides the only way that he can be safe is to kill himself. He writes his suicide note is simple. But the choice in endings is up to the actor, does he kill himself or does he reread the note and decide that he is worth more?

### **57. Hidden Treasures**

Hidden Treasures tells the story of a woman who has been systematically abused. Her husband Steven has separated her from her family and friends and isolated her so that he is her only contact with anyone. She is only allowed to talk to her family a certain amount of time and he must be present for the conversation. It is not until Steven goes to jail that she finally gets a bit of freedom but by this time she has separated from reality. She speaks often of the "treasures" that she has hidden from everyone to keep them safe. Simple and loving these treasures seem. It is not until Stephen is released from prison and comes home to find hidden boxes in the garage. Stephen didn't know that his wife was ever pregnant...let alone pregnant seven times. Her treasures are no longer hidden. She is still searching for her freedom. Still hoping that someday she will be able to explain, and her children will understand.

### **58. An Unusual Melody**

An older African American man Clifford recounts the joys of his life. He begins with his wonderful music career as a singer, writer, and guitar player until one night during a performance his eyes meet her eyes, and everything changes. He meets Beatrice, the woman that would become his wife and the biggest blessing in his life. From their union they have a son Sheldon. But things begin to go wrong in his head when the voices begin to talk to him. He talks about his wife and son as if they are still alive when they are only alive in his mind. Not taking his medication keeps a lot of voices in his head and two of those voices are that of his wife and son. When the voices overcome him with the reality of their death, he must fight to maintain his sanity. Sadly, in the end he is back where he started. And while he is happy living in an incorrect reality, the sadness comes when we realize that the voices will always take the people that he loved the most away, and the cycle continues.

### **59. Knocking on Heavens Door**

An elderly man shares with us his story of love and loss. He has a wonderful energy that makes us want to listen to him. During his story, we see a pain come through him that is captivating. He begins to tell the story of the day that he disciplines his grandson, and an accident happens that takes his family away from him forever. One simple accident, one mistake and one bad decision changes the life of this man forever. Forgiveness is one of the most difficult things to do as human beings, but it is even more of a challenge to find the strength to forgive yourself.

### **60. Not My Reflection**

A woman of mixed race remembers her childhood of not understanding why her mother never treated her like she loved her. All she wanted was to feel the love that she saw all her friends getting. It wasn't until she got older that she came to realize that the reason that her mother treated her so differently was because she was a product of a rape. Finally, her mother tells her as a teenager why she hates her so much. She is kicked out of the house and finds herself picking up her clothes from the lawn and starting her life on her own at sixteen. Now that she has a child of her own, she accepts that she cannot go back, never find out if her mother changes because she has to protect her child from an evil thing, hate.

### **61. The Shadows of Kings**

Bayard Rustin was a part of one of the most historic events in American History, the Civil Rights Movement. He is one of the unknown heroes of the movement being one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s right hand men. Standing in the presence of Kings he was truly one of them. Responsible for assisting Dr. King in writing his speeches and being one of his closest friends and supporters Rustin was a true man of honor. During the Movement Rustin also had another movement spilling into his world, he was gay. Eventually he was fired from his post and in this performance, he tells the



story of what it felt like to fight for the freedom of part of who he was and not the other part. Was the timing not right, or was the Civil Rights Movement the priority for America to deal with and the other freedoms would soon follow? It is a challenging story that shows the challenge of having to choose which part of yourself is most important and accepting that the things that we want or even need may take time to come to fruition. (Fiction)

### **62. Cleansing from The Burka**

Liridona is a young Saudi Arabian woman growing up in the deep-rooted beliefs of her parents and their village. When she begins to question if this is the life that she wants for herself she starts to do things that she is not allowed to do. She begins to read things and sneak into her father's office and watch the news. She begins to see women from other countries who are living free of worries, fear and uncovered from the things that hide who these women are. Her mother tries to teach her how to live and stay alive as a woman in this country, but Liridona soon realizes that this is not the life for her. All she wants is so simple, she wants to walk outside and feel the sun on her face. She wants to feel the sun on one side and the cool of water on the other. Finally, on day she decides to walk out of her home, stand in the street and unwrap herself. By discarding her burka, she was showing the utmost disrespect for her father and the other men in the village in addition to their culture. Liridona knew that she would be punished, and in the street that day, with the village watching her and her mother devastated but watching from a distance Liridona loses her life, for a simple freedom. (\*Student may speak Arabic within the piece)

### **63. My Home Is War**

A teenage Arabic girl is forced to instantly to become the caregiver for her younger siblings when her mother and father are brutally murdered in their home. After watching this horrific event she sneaks her siblings out of the house, and they go on the run. Running from village to village, sleeping in the streets, stealing and begging for food and all the while fighting to stay alive in a country that is forever at war. The sounds of bombs going off, the unrest of having to pack up and run because the military is moving in to rather the bodies of the dead. Trying to explain to her siblings why this is the life that they are forced to live weighs on her daily. When one of her little brothers gets sick, she must decide if she will leave him at the hospital for care knowing she will never see him again and he will be put into an Israeli orphanage, or does she allow him to die with his family and join his parents? This story is about the struggle of being a teenager in a place not many of us know, but for many it is very real, and it is their war at home. (\*Student may speak Arabic within the piece)

### **64. My Mother's Beautiful Shadow**

Liza Minnelli is a household name and is in the hearts of many Americans, performers, and others. Her story is a simple yet complex series of wonderful events. In this performance she speaks candidly about her mother Judy Garland. Talking about the

things that made her a wonderful mother and why living in her shadow, though difficult shoes to fill, were also the most amazing fit. From her success as an actress to her untimely death and the toll that death took on her. She shares with the audience how important they are to her success and all the things that her mother taught her about being a star and being a woman. With her quick wit and fun energy, we see Liza through the eyes of a simple woman who, like many other women before her, just wanted to be herself. During the loss of her mother, she begins to take prescription drugs to balance life. She speaks of the hard reality of her choices, good and bad. It is a clip from a film, a moment in time, a brief look into the life of Liza Minnelli and all the things that make us love her as a performer, but on this day, we love her as a person as well. (Fiction)

### **65. A Chance at Acceptance**

Chance is an African American man with well-kept secrets. He prides himself on being a great teacher to his students. But during teaching, he must get assistance for his own problems. He was born addicted to alcohol and developed turrets disorder genetically from his absentee father. When he is asked to leave school as a child for being a disruption due to his turrets he is forced to be homeschooled. He loves education; he loves learning and decides that he is going to become a teacher. After finishing his degree Chance hires a tutor to assist him with his turrets and prepare him for being a part of the social environment of school. Chance always knew he was different, but it is not until after two years of hiding his illness in his interviews that his tutor encourages him to be honest and tell people his life challenges. In that moment Chance opens up all of his hidden secrets by professing his love for his teacher. It is sometimes in the freedom of other life struggles that we find the courage to confront others. It is his chance to be himself, in front of the world, his Chance at acceptance.

### **66. Most Memorable Day**

Javier is an El Salvadorian man who is during the most memorable day of his life. He is making signs that he is very proud of, signs for a protest for gay rights. He shares with us his life of being exiled by his family for being a gay man and going against his religion to do so. His father and brothers no longer speak to him, but his mother sends him pictures of the family to keep him as much of a part of the family as possible, but he is no longer welcome in their home. Since he moved away, he has begun to work on the campaign for Harvey Milk. As he speaks of the reasons and things that make this the fight for him, we see the love and appreciation that he has for Harvey, not only for standing up but also for speaking out. Harvey believed in supporting the people that he represented, not just gay people and that is what made him such an important politician. On the wake of his win Javier is assisting him in his office in City Hall when he hears bullets ring out and Harvey is hit. As he dies at Javier's feet, he must find his purpose in life. He is suddenly faced with the reality that he was following a great man for a great cause, but in the loss of that man he must now find himself during this tragedy. The scene ends with him reading his signs as he begins to wash the blood from the day out of his clothing. He will never forget this day.

### **67. Reporting Live from Ferguson, MO**

Layla Jefferies is an African American reporter. She often feels as though she blends in well with her white counterparts until something happens in the world that forces her and everyone around her to see that she stands alone because of her race. When her producer calls her to go on scene at the riots and protests that are happening in Ferguson, MO after the police shooting death of Michael Brown, she must accept that she is being sent because she is black. There are aspects of her that understands the logic behind sending her there, but there are also parts of her that recognize that race is a problem; for the country, not just the people that a black face represents. She tells a beautiful story of her struggle for what is right and what will keep her job happy by reporting. With a microphone in hand and the camera rolling Layla learns more about herself on this assignment than she ever thought possible. Reporting live from Ferguson, MO.

### **68. Things We Bring Back**

Jerry is a veteran from the War in Afghanistan. After serving three tours he is finally home with his wife and son. Unfortunately, Jerry has some skeletons in his closet that he brought back with him that will not be hidden for long. He can't sleep. He can't focus and the two reasons he had for living, his son Jesse and his wife Stacy are the two people that he ends up hurting the most. When the dreams turn into nightmares that won't go away, when light is always too bright, and all sounds are always too loud Jerry starts to lose his mind. He starts to see innocent people as his enemy. Passing cars start to sound like the engines of military tanks. The longer that Jerry is not on the battlefield the more that his mind takes him back there and he can't fight it anymore. His breaking moment comes on the saddest of days when his head is fighting against him in such a way that he can no longer fight it. The only thing a soldier can do is go to war, the war home in his own head. The sound of his son's footsteps become the boots of militant insurgents that want to kill him and in an instant Jerry does what a warrior does best, he kills. In the silence that he has been waiting for he holds his son, the reason that he lives.

### **69. Deliverance**

Betty is a woman on her deathbed. She has lived through the death of her husband and is now days away from joining him. A large part of her husband's death was his ability to take advantage of cleansing his soul before he dies. He shares with her his deepest secrets so that she can forgive him, and he can die peacefully. In hopes of joining her husband she decides that it is time to cleanse her soul to her daughter. She reveals the story of a day and time when racism was a way of life, a day when the whole family goes deep into the forest and watches a public lynching. Her daughter remembered this day and she remembered the lies that her mother told her to try to get her to forget the situation and think it was a dream. Will her daughter give her the forgiveness that she needs, or will she die before the greatest gift is given, the ability to die with a free heart and find her love on the other side? (\*Character does go back and forth in time so actress will need to be able to play age.)

## **70. Taking Flight**

Rachel is a wonderful, spirited, and high-energy person. She has a wonderful outlook on the life that she has lived and laughing is one of her greatest gives. The more she shares the more we fall in love with her and her story. She is preparing herself for her wedding day. When a plane passes overhead, she is taken into a memory of her life with her father, the only thing missing on this day. Her father was a stunts pilot. When she was young, she watched from the ground as her father's plane lost control and tore into the ground. For days her mother tried to protect her from the gruesomeness of the accident, but Rachel insisted on seeing her father. He was wrapped from head to toe with third degree burns over 90% of his body. Her mother was right, it was a vision that she will never be able to forget, but she was able to tell her father she loved him and say goodbye. Now she must walk down the aisle without her hero as her escort but as she prepares herself planes continue to fly overhead and final she knows that if only in spirit her father is still there.

## **71. By the Numbers**

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or OCD is a sickness that literally takes away someone's ability to live their life as they see fit. For Kevin a series of unexpected realities stole his life before his mind took over and finished the job. As a child he has two loving and wonderful parents that support each other and him in every way. But as life happens everything that he knew to be true and good slowly falls apart. His mother gets cancer that begins to spread and as his father tries to do everything, Kevin slowly gets lost in translation. Kevin's father soon slips into a depression that he never comes out of and hating Kevin is a part of his psychosis. Kevin starts to fend for himself but when his mother dies, and his father dies shortly after Kevin is thrust into foster care. The only thing that makes sense for him, the only thing he can hold onto is his perfection, his parents, both of them, TWO. As Kevin obsesses over the number two, it overtakes his life. He must do everything two times. Combing his hair, washing hands, locking, and unlocking the door, the time he can leave the house. It takes him to another place. Eventually Kevin is not in control of his actions anymore. Two slices of bread turn into two pain pills and other drugs taken in twos. But it only takes one bullet in one gun to end Kevin's pain and lift him to freedom.

## **72. Animal**

Fredrick is a dog. At least in his mind he is a dog. He has a master that he is faithful too that feeds him and gives him a cage to sleep in in the barn that is safe and comfortable. Fredrick has been with the family for years and as we watch, she talks about all the other dogs that have come through over the years he reminds us that he is the smartest and strongest dog in the barn. It is not until Fredrick meets a sweet, beautiful cat named Evelyn that he starts to see the world differently. When master catches Evelyn in the barn with Fredrick, he takes her out of the barn and beats her. It is what Evelyn says to Fredrick that forces him to listen and reflect on what is real. She yells at him that he is not a dog he is a man. It takes everything in

her to make him see that this fact is true. Fredrick watches her die with him being the last thing that she sees. Fredrick finally begins to remember who he is. With the effects of slavery and years of abuse coming back into his memory he decides that he must stand up for once in his life to his oppressors. If only Evelyn had lived to see this dog, once again stand as a man. (\*Actor must be African American)

### **73. Worlds Away**

Afsana is a Muslim- American girl who has found love in a place that she knows will not be accepted by her family or her religion. After meeting Jason in one of her college classes, dating and falling in love with him she decides that telling her family would not be the best thing to do for anyone. But when her father sets her up with a young Muslim man that he believes will be perfect for her she comes clean and tells them the truth. After which her father and mother cut her out of their lives. Afsana then moves in with Jason and they begin their life together. Jason is in the Marines and is on a tour in Afghanistan when he is gunned down but a group of Muslim militants. Afsana is left picking up the pieces and accepting that the man that she loved was killed by the culture she represents. It wasn't until the loss of Jason that her parents come around. They are there with her when his flag is delivered, and her father often asks her to tell him a story about Jason. The hardest thing to deal with is the idea that Jason was not accepted until he was dead, but at least her parents know that he was her everything. Will Afsana ever be able to move on? She asks herself the same question as the scene ends. (\*Student should be of Muslim or Arabic background. There is Arabic within the piece as well as prayers.)

### **74. Blossoming Rose**

Kayla is a wonderful woman who has been dealt a terrible hand. At the age of five she lost most of her hearing due to fluid in her ears. She speaks poetically about the life that she had, what she could remember of her childhood and a special connection to music, the most important sound she can't hear anymore. When she finally loses her hearing, she begins a journey of strength. Overcoming things that she never she had the strength for. With the support of her sister Judith, she is able to learn sign language and reconnect with the ability to communicate. At a New Year's party her eardrums are ruptured and the little bit of sound she did have was completely taken away. When she woke after her surgery, she had been given the greatest gift, the gift of sound. Kayla only has sound for two weeks before history repeats itself and again her ears go numb to life. But it is through the journey of having sound, losing it, gaining it and losing it again that she realizes that she is enough, for anything. (\*Actress must know sign language)

### **75. My Life's Master Class**

Ladinas Barkley is a college professor teaching one of his last master classes in acting. He is a British actor who remembers the days of sitting in the theatre and watching Lawrence Olivier play some of his most memorable roles. It is important to him that the students in his class understand what makes an actor someone who can change lives. Through the performance he speaks from a place of passion about the art of acting and

the things that we sacrifice to be actors. Amid his lesson, he taps into an emotional place that makes him share with his students the worst of the need for success revealing the day that his mentor, and teacher, began to sexually abuse him. In this emotional breakdown he tells his students that there has to be a line that they are not willing to cross for the promise of fame. His speech is almost poetic as he bares his soul and much like the ballots of Shakespeare, he ends with his favorite monologue from Richard III saying, "I am I." What are any of us willing to do for success? Do we lose ourselves to do it? (The actor must speak Shakespeare.)

## **76. To Fly**

Stephen is a difficult and different child. When he is born his parents tell him that he is their first child of many. As he gets older his parents and Stephen begin to realize that he is not like other kids. He has an extraordinary amount of energy that keeps him in trouble at school to a point that his father had to quit his job to homeschool him. His father refused for his son to be labeled but taking care of Stephen was more than a full-time job. After Stephen's father suffers a stroke, his mother gets Stephen medicated for his extreme ADHD. It changes him, inside and out. He can attend school and learn but the medication makes Stephen a zombie with no feelings other than anger and fear. Stephen's violence leads him to the ledge of his bedroom window and in a flash, he experiences the freedom of flight. All Stephen wants is for his mind to stop- just stop. So that he can sleep and be normal. The ledge lands him in a hospital where he realizes this is the best place for him, but the idea of another flight probes his mind daily.

## **77. Burning Scars**

Tiffany stands before herself naked in the mirror surveying her body. This is her ritual; this is what she does every day. To make sure that none of her scars have opened during the night, no sores, no bleeding. She shows us her most vulnerable side as she shares how she got the scars that she wears over most of her body. Remembering the woman that she was and the stranger that she has become. Domestic violence is a serious offense in society and sometimes people never see it coming. Tiffany never thought that she would open her door to a bottle of gasoline. Never thought that this man would smile as she burned. But she fought through, and she survived. Sometimes life's greatest lessons are the ones that hurt the most to learn. Sometimes we must be reminded of these lessons on a daily basis, by simply looking in the mirror. As we see in Tiffany the scars that she lives with are no match to her burning will to live, succeed, and tell her story of overcoming the most painful experience in her life to then be transformed.

## **78. Cheer Life**

Rebecca is much like any other teenager girl. She is beautiful, full of energy and she wants to be a cheerleader when she grows up. Having been on cheer for most of her life making the varsity team was a dream come true, but it is what she must do to

maintain that dream that starts to break Rebecca's spirit. The girls must weigh in every week and must maintain a certain weight to cheer. If they are overweight the things, they are willing to do to their bodies to lose the weight within the twenty-four hours given by their coach is unspeakable. When Rebecca finds herself starved, high on meth and running in the middle of the night the only thing she wants is her mother. She calls for her, cries for her and by the time her mother finds her in the middle of the street Rebecca's dreams of cheering are over along with her life. It is not until the near end that we realize that it is the spirit of Rebecca that is telling us this tragic story. In the end she visits her own funeral, and she always comes to see her mother who was the strongest woman that she knew and now she has to find the strength to move forward without her little girl.

### **79. Eye**

Angelica is an attractive woman who enjoys putting on make-up like most women do. It is when she gets to her eyes that things begin to shift. Because she realizes that it is was her eyes that attracted him to her in the first place. After meeting the man that would soon become her husband Angelica's life would change forever. It wasn't until after the rings were exchanged that her husband Jason went from the love of her life to her captor. Jason decided that Angelica was his property to do with what he chose. The first time she disagreed and was met with a blow to the face. After years of abuse, broken bones and a broken spirit Angelica shares her story of triumph and overcoming the monster that she married. Her ability to move forward, to look at herself in the mirror and not hate what she sees.

### **80. Holding onto Grace**

Chandler is a man in distress. He is in the hospital room of his wife who is presently in a coma; she is also pregnant with their first child. He recalls a time when he and his wife Beth met at an improve comedy club meeting in high school. She was the leader, and he was passing by the room to go to a detention, but he saw her, and he had to stop. He joined the team they fell in love and to change the road he was headed down he joined the military and committed his life to her. His life forever changed the day he found out that his pregnant wife had been struck by a drunk driver and was fighting for her life. Chandler holds in his hands the paperwork that he has to sign allowing the hospital to keep Beth alive until the baby is born and then they will let her die. The most difficult day in a man's life as he says hello to his daughter Grace and goodbye to the love of his life.

### **81. I Am My Name**

Aamen is an American born woman to Muslim parents. She recounts her history with this country and how she has always considered herself an American never forgetting where she came from and always respecting her heritage. She was pregnant when 9/11 happened and experienced great racism when she made it to the hospital. The looks that she was given by patrons and staff were very hurtful.

But it was finding out that now of one of America's greatest tragedies and the birth of her child that her parents were dying after being hit in a car accident. She talks of the day that she went to the 9/11 Memorial to pay her respects and was beaten by a group of people that only saw her burka and associated her with being a terrorist. There is nothing more difficult than sharing an anniversary with a day that will never truly be yours. Though battered and beaten she recovers and refuses to not pay her respects every year forcing the world to accept that she is much more than just what she looks like, she is a person with a name and that means something.

## **82. Last Words**

Janie is a young girl in her mid-twenties living out her last day on death row. She wants the world to know what she went through as a child that got her to where she is, the most prolific female serial killer of all time. She talks in detail about her childhood growing up with a prostitute mother who sold her for drugs, the man that she thought was her father was really her mother's dealer and pimp. The pain that she has as a child trying to understand why her family isn't like the families she sees on television and trying to find love and acceptance but not being able to understand why she can't have it. She writes this letter to her mother to let her know she is to blame for the person she has become. After enjoying her last meal, the fluids are injected into her arm and as she dies she asks for the one thing she never received in all of her life, compassion.

## **83. My Best Friend Charlie**

The prompt for his senior year English final was simple, "It was to tell the story of someone who has affected American History." His answer was Charles Manson. After fighting with his teacher and his parents he was given permission under the argument that the prompt didn't say that the affect had to be positive, but he got much more than he had bargained for. He became obsessed with Manson: reading every book, every trial transcript, every article, even sitting in the courtroom where he was sentenced. His mind began to go places he never thought possible. Eventually he couldn't handle school anymore and his parents tried desperately to save his mind from the hold that this man's historical events had on him. After a fight with depression, he busts out the window in his room and tries to jump. Luckily his parents can save him, but he just wanted to bleed for Charlie. Maybe the blood would make him worthy of being in the family. He is older now, recovered and has his mind back but he will never forget those eight months that he gave his mind to Helter- skelter.

## **84. Silent Thoughts**

Lana is a beautiful woman who opens the scene humming and connecting with the audience. When she opens her mouth to begins singing nothing comes out. Lana has lost her ability to talk, sing and write due to a tragic accident that damaged her brain. But in this performance, we see both sides of Lana, the side that can talk and communicate with s and the part that can't. She talks of the time that changed her life when her mother



unexpectedly died, and she made it her life's mission to make it on Broadway. It was that dream that had her attention the day she was in the car accident that took her voice. Now all she wants is to be able to speak and be heard. This is a powerful piece that deals with the human heart and our innate ability to recover while still fighting with our own demons. Not only must she accept her life's sentence, but she must also be able to balance it with waking up every morning a different person than who she would like to be, acceptance for who she is presents a great challenge. Lana ends the scene much how she began it, with an inaudible song that transforms into a beautiful hum, which brings her closure. (\*Performer is expected to make sounds that cannot be understood, and hum beautifully.)

### **85. Breaking Voices**

Lena is a beautiful, well-put together and well-spoken Hispanic woman. She begins her story as a child and her first memory of dancing with her favorite doll Patty followed by being physically abused by her grandmother. As she reflects on her life trying to put the pieces together so that she can better understand how she got to this point of recovery she opens about her life. The abuse she endured at the hands of her grandmother eventually became more than she could handle. After many hits to the side of her head she lost most of her hearing and began to learn sign language, a certain comfort came over her in the silence. But it was the doll that Officer Patterson gave her at a very young age that she held on to, naming it "Patty" and never forgetting that if she ever needed him all she had to do was call 9-1-1 and he would come. By the time that her abuse had progressed to its climax Lena had created a collection of personalities that the audience gets to experience. Lena then finds herself standing at the base of the staircase looking down at her grandmother who was dead at her feet. Did she kill her? She didn't remember what happened, but she found her voice finally, picked up the phone and called her only friend for help. (\*Piece requires some Spanish and some basic sign language.)

### **86 I've Changed**

Janet is a woman in her mid-twenties sharing the story of her life. Janet started out her life as a little boy named Jarrod. Jarrod knew at a young age that he was different, and his mother knew as well. His mother allowed him to dress as a little girl because that is what made him happy. Soon she had to leave her husband and take Janet with her because he didn't understand and couldn't support a child like this. Janet found great comfort in the support that she got from her mother but also realized that she had a terrible taste in men. Man after man would move in and psychologically and physically abuse both Janet and her mother while it always centering on this "thing" that Janet was becoming. Finally, Janet's mother decided that she had given all she could give and told Janet that she had to get out on her own and figure her life out. Janet tries to find a safety net at the local shelters but there is none, no one loves her anymore, no one will help her and absolutely no one understands. Janet begins to do things to survive that she never thought she would ever have to do until she receives an envelope with a memorial program in it, her mother had passed, and her family buried her without telling her first. Her story is one of abuse

but more on the strength that it takes to be, we, whoever that is. (\*This piece is to be done by a male to female presenting performer.)

### **87. Walk to Remember**

Luther Jones is an African American man living in Selma, AL. He is an older man who has lived through a lot of life. In the wake of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the March on Selma he reflects on his participation on that day fifty years earlier. From singing in church to saying goodbye to his mother Luther recounts the activities that he believes shaped his life. Events that made him want to create a better life for his children even if it met risking his life to do it. He walks hand in hand with the other thousands of men and women that day hoping for equality. As he sifts through his memories of this day, we see a man that has risked his life for the greater good and lost a lot of himself along the way. But no matter the price that was paid he is determined to make the march again, visit the trail where his life was forever changed and grab hands for his Walk to Remember.

### **88. Justice for All**

Olivia is a senior in high school. She is also the white daughter of the police officer that has recently shot an unarmed African American teenager. Olivia's struggle is one that needs to be shared with the world. As more and more situations like this arise the people often missed are those affected behind the situation, the families of the officers. Her story is one of genuine concern for her father and the hatred that he has gotten from the situation without the ability for anyone to tell their side of the story she doesn't understand how he can be crucified. She is fighting the overwhelming theme of her father being a racist but in her eyes, he is just her daddy. Her argument for justice is a logical one, a strong voice and a presence that should make people sit back in their chairs and ponder in the present day is it possible that race does not play a factor? As her and her father pray for the recovery of the teenage boy Olivia shares with us her strong relationship with her father in hopes that someone, anyone will listen and allow him to be innocent until proven guilty.

### **89. Wave of Destruction**

When a man and his family move to Asia and experience the worst tsunami on record, he finds himself fighting not only to save them but to save his sanity. While sitting on the beach with his family an earthquake rattles the sand and in an instant, they find themselves running for their lives. But when his wife gets swept away and he decides to leave his children to go and look for her he must live with the consequences of his choices. To save everyone he finds himself as the only man left standing. The poetry in the way in which he describes this horrific experience is like no other natural disaster explanation. As he revisits the beach to get closer to his family, he begins to realize that this evil ocean that swept away all the people that he

loved didn't leave him out...as in the last moments he finds his family in the clouds and walks on the ocean waves hand in hand with them.

### **90. Amazing Grace**

An African American woman who was a member of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina recounts the day that her church went from a historic symbol to a national headline. Her story is different from others, she was on her way to church that night and was held up that night making her arrival late and missing the massacre. She doesn't know why, and she doesn't understand why she was chosen to live and others that night had to die. But like all great tragedies those left behind are filled with overwhelming emotions and the one question, "Why?" She prays and sings her way to an understanding of what it means to be knocked down and find your way back up to your feet. Remembering her pastor, her friends and the people that became her family while recognizing that the person that killed them was a child reaching out to someone for something and no one grabbed his hand. Her positive attitude teaches us all a lesson in forgiveness and the skill or art of being able to move on and pray again with all the faith that God has given you.

### **91. With Steady Hands**

Hannah Weston is a surgeon. She takes great pride in her job even reciting the doctor oath during surgeries but like all people Hannah has a story to tell. After finishing a surgery, she shares her first experiences as a doctor as a child giving her mother stitches after her drunken father beat her. This continued for many years until her mother got the courage to leave her father, but she also left her behind. The abuse had already been a part of her life but got worse upon her mother's departure, but Hannah never lost sight of her life goal, to be a doctor and she achieved it. It is not until a drunk driver is brought in that she realizes just how much unfinished business she has with her father. With the man lying on her table her minds begin to wonder if she could kill him. Finally realizing that this man isn't her father she operates on him and saves his life though in the car accident he caused five people died. She realizes that doctors do have the ability to play God, to give and take life, but she could not do it anymore. Immediately after this night her hand begins to have uncontrollable tremors that end her career, but it forces her to deal with herself. It is in working on the inside that she finds the ability to once again breath freely and live day-to-day helping people in whatever way she can.

### **92. Eye of Perfection**

Jullian is not the typical teenager. He is a straight A student, a part of as many activities as he possibly can be, he is a leader within his school, and he has a positive future ahead of him. Like all teenagers he also has his challenges, secrets, and things that he hides from his friends but especially from his family every day. The older he gets the more he begins to accept who he is as a person and during all of the things that make him look "great on paper" as his father tells him, the one thing about him that's not there is that he is gay. In his mind it's part of him, something else that makes him stand out, but he has

not been able to express this in his life. The time comes that he decides to come out to his parents and his life immediately changes. His parents make a public spectacle of his situation telling anyone one who will listen of this tragedy that they are experiencing. Unfortunately, small town USA is not forgiving, accepting, tolerant, or open-minded to people who aren't like them. Within a year Jullian went from "perfect" to standing on the edge of life and death. He is bullied at school, beaten severely and with no support from his parents he has no one. After he is released from the hospital, he comes home to find his parents having movie night as if nothing has happened. His mind breaks and he does the only thing his mind will allow him to do, take a knife and kill them. In the end he sits, with his parents, eating popcorn and finally feeling alive again. Resting the remainder of his life in a nice room with four white walls, again perfect and finally free.

### **93. In an Instant**

On the outside Pamela was like any other 17-year-old girl. She was popular, beautiful, and interviewed by many. But in her house and then the inside Pamela was an absolute wreck. The one thing that we all seek is the one thing that she didn't have and that is love. Her parents want to perfection, something that she could never give them. And as much as she was admired by her peers the most important people in her life wouldn't give her the time of day. But the other playing the Pamela wanted was the love of chess. After dating Jess for a while, they ended up at the same party. But something was different, and things had changed. It is at this moment that Pamela finds out that Jess was using her to pass chemistry class. When she finds Jess in a bedroom with another girl she snaps. Walking out of that house with two murders on her hands she goes to the only place that she's ever felt safe, home. The piece takes place with the use of flashbacks in and out of the jail cell. Pam with blood desperately tries to tell someone her story, anyone who will listen. As the story goes on the audience will continue to ask themselves is she crazy, or was she just really in love?

### **94. Another Breath**

Beth is a woman mourning the death of her husband. The scene starts with her speaking to the media, expressing her appreciation of the support she has received since her husband, an unarmed African American man was shot dead, murdered. She thanks the community for their: calls, flowers and cards expressing their love and support. She switches back and forth within the performance from being the wife in mourning of a murder that should not have happened and being the battered woman of the man who was murdered. The public presentation is one that has been seen often in recent history but what happens when the cameras are gone and what had happened before the situation occurred are very different realities. Beth is torn between privately feeling a silent appreciation to the officer who killed her abusive husband and being the face of what has become an epidemic. As she collects the last of the cards and decides that keeping her private life private, we see the soul that had once been lost be found again, in a silent double-edged sword of losing her husband in a public murder and gaining her freedom in a private and silent "thank you." The tables have suddenly changed for her, and she can now move forward free of fear of being beaten to death and losing the child she is

presently carrying like she had before. Life is now shining on her. **\*While the story deals with the murder of an African American man by a police officer Beth does not have to be African American.**

### **95. If Only I Had Known**

On the morning of September 6, 2015, Stacy gets up and proceeds like any other morning. But unfortunately, as her day progresses, she finds out that there has been a shooting at her son's middle school. As she watches the television frantic and frozen, she realizes that she must get to her son's school as soon as possible. Upon arrival she stands behind the barricades with all the rest of the parents holding pictures of their children in hand, waiting to hear a word from the authorities. As time passes the all-clear signal is given and children begin to exit the school. Stacy watches as parents around her are reunited with her children. She asked one of the students if they know her son and the mother replies "He's shooter." Surrounded by a mob of angry parents without the ability to defend herself Stacy is brutally attacked. The one thing that she holds onto is the only thing that she has, a school picture of her son Andrew. She finally realizes what it was that took her son to do what he did, but by this time it is too late, for both. This performance is a mature and very real look into the horror associated with being a parent amid a crisis and the realization that humanity is not always present and not always on our side.

### **96. Powerful Hands**

Leroy "The Supreme" Robinson is an African American man in his late thirties remembering how his life changed. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY where he learned how to fight and that is exactly what he did, all the time. He had so much misdirected anger that after he graduated from high school his father took him to the local boxing gym and it was there that he finally found his way. He stopped being violent towards other people and started directing his skills into the ring. He became the man his father always knew he could be. But one night after a fight, the first fight that Leroy brings his eight-year-old son to, he finds himself in the alley with his son and father walking towards his car and looking down the barrel of a gun. He had fought so hard to not use his hands for harm but as he stands frozen in time listening to his son cry in fear, he does what he must do to protect him. When he comes out of his rage and the man is dead Leroy realizes that he didn't even know his greatest fear until now and even though it was self-defense a life is a life. He ends much like he began, standing in front of a mirror remembering how he got there, getting prepared for his son's high school graduation realizing that he did change his life around for the better, through every fist he threw.

### **97. The Hanging Tree**

Ester is an older African American woman who is sitting by a tall tree. She looks at the tree reflecting on life. She touches the tree as if the life of someone she loved was growing within its roots, and this is true. She begins to tell her story of the reason

that this tree is so important. It is the last “Hanging Tree” in the Texas city of Mansfield. It is the tree that many years ago her son Toby was hung from one of the branches. In a time in American history when African American people were fighting for their freedom to live as any free men and women, many people of all ages took to the streets to march in protest. Against Ester’s better judgment Toby participates in a march and ends up hanging from a tree that is now standing in the middle of the downtown square, on display as a symbol of the past for many in the city. But for Ester it is a place where she can connect with her son who was taken from her long before his time. Ester’s reality of the situation is a sobering vision of a mother’s grief and how it is possible to experience the great loss of your life and still move forward.

### **98. The History of Truth**

The most difficult bond to break is that of family. The connection that a father has with his son is not like any other relationship they will forge. For Devin (African American) his male role model came in the form of Pop’s, his grandfather. Pops told him about his great grandfather who was a freed slave and how their bloodline came to be. He taught him how to be a man and more than that he taught him how to love. That during the abusive home he was raised in his father’s drinking and his mother’s inability to stand up for herself and her child Devin could still be a good person. Now Devin is during the greatest moment of his life, he is about to become a father. But as he sits in his unborn son’s room, he wonders how he will explain to him that his grandmother is dead at the hands of his grandfather. How does he tell him that you can love someone and still decide that putting them in prison for the rest of their lives is the best decision for everyone involved? And through all that he still remembers moments of joy and love, he still knows that his father loves him. He still holds onto the values Pop’s taught him but as a man and as a person he refuses to allow his son to live in the same shadows that he lived in. It is in the passing down of stories and sometimes artifacts that history is made. This piece is a moment in time for a young man to reflect on his life before he brings life into the world that was created for him. **\*Character is African American.**

### **99. Rising Sun**

Lucia is a strong woman who migrated from Mexico like most in hopes of a better life. Her journey begins with her remembering what freedom felt like, something as simple as feeling the sun on her face. When her mother decides to take her and her sisters to America in search of work the women endure a treacherous seventeen-hour trip that ends with two less stowaways than they started with, a sign of their life to come. For seven years from age 11-18 she worked on a vegetable farm in California living in slave-like conditions until her mother died and she realized that for a second time in her life the only thing she could do to save her life is run. After burying her mother on the property of the field she turns and runs to her freedom, a story of survival and struggle in a present time situation that is not regulated in

America. Lucia is the voice of many migrant workers, and her story should be told and heard. **\*Character does speak some Spanish.**

### **100. Life's Unfinished Game**

Quinn is a young woman recounting her childhood that was full of abuse from her father. Her and her brother Joey spent a lot of their childhood locked in a closet playing games with their mother who found that this was the safest place for them. As she relives her childhood, she shares the events leading up to a deadly fire that kills both of her parents and makes her, and Joey orphans thrust into a system that does not keep them any safer than they had been before. All Quinn wanted was to be loved and to experience a normal life but as she is placed in yet another abusive situation and loses Joey who tries to defend her Quinn begins to lose hope. It is in this moment of reflection that she begins to move forward. She begins to realize that unlike the checkers games she played in the closet as a child she can walk away from the game and still win, she can choose to not be a reflection of her past. Quinn soon accepts that she started the fire that killed her father as she reached her hand to help her mother, she worked to save him, again turning her back on her children. Is it possible to move past such a hellish childhood and still be able to breathe? Quinn demonstrated that we can all play the game of life anyway we choose and come out on top.

### **101. The Parts I've Played**

Bethany Stanton is the ideal vision of the class Hollywood actress of the 1940's. Bethany is beautiful, strong willed and talented and when she makes her entrance into Hollywood straight off a bus from Dallas, TX she is ready to make her mark. As she shares her story of making it to Hollywood and living in a woman's shelter before landing her first role and believing that everything, she wanted in life was about to happen, she finds that the dream she had wanted was one that came with consequences. While she recognizes that she has had success she also yearns to be a star, not constantly reaching for the lead role but obtaining it. Soon the stress of who she wants to be overwhelms the person that she is and the actress she has been. She finds herself looking into the bottom of a bottle paired with a bottle of pills just to create calm. Bethany grows into a woman that looks back over her life on the big screen and sees the shell of a woman this "life" has turned her in to. Accepting that if she could go back in time, she would tell her teenage self to, "Keep your pretty ass in Dallas, TX and live a normal life. Don't do it." But sometimes seeking a dream can be a powerful thing.

### **102. The Choice**

Sullivan is a man who lives and breathes the blues. It is the one thing in life that gives him air. When the scene opens Sullivan is preparing for his day, cleaning off his suit and putting his hat on as the first subway trains arrive. He begins to sing the blues to the passerby's hoping for a bit of change. Why is someone so talented stuck

singing the blues in the subways of New York? Sullivan shares with us the day that he met his wife while he sang in the music studio, she walked into the room and stole his heart but when she tells him she is pregnant around the same time that he gets the biggest offered the biggest contract of his life he has a choice to make. Does he quit singing the blues to be a father and husband or does he walk away from his family to live out his dreams? He decides to walk out on his wife and daughter who he was not present to ever see born. It doesn't take long for him to realize that without family he is nothing, by this time his wife is gone, and his baby girl is gone with her. Sitting on the subway he has nothing left but to sing the blues, to tell his story hoping that one day he will see them again. Sadly, Sullivan never finds them, but at his subway stop there is a girl, a girl that he feels he knows, is it his daughter? He may never know, but something about her gives him calm and makes him sing another note to live another day.

### **103. Laughs for My Father**

Jason stands before us a comedian on the most important night of his life. Not because it is a big show with an audience full of people but rather because the most important person is sitting in watching him for the first time, his father. Jason grew up in a home with a mother that was in so much fear she did nothing to save his son from his abusive father. Neither parent showed him love, supported him, or hoped that he would be successful at anything. But on this night Jason has invited his father to watch him do his stand-up routine. It is the first time he has ever had his father's attention and it is the most difficult moment of his life. To stand on stage and try to tell jokes when the only thing on his mind is that his dad is there. As he continues, he loses himself becoming wrapped up in his childhood memories of what his father did to him and how on this night all he wanted was for his father to sit and for the first time in his life listen to him. Just listen to the things that he has to say, the life that he is living because of his father. There laughs are not plentiful, not as much as the sorrow is of a man that shares his soul with a bunch of strangers watching him on stage, one of which he calls, "Dad."

### **104. I Will Not Be Silenced**

Adam is a man still emotionally working through one of the worst experiences of his life. On the night of his fifth anniversary after a wonderful night of celebration he exits the club and finds himself fighting for his life. His husband Scott is lying on the ground covered in blood. A man stands over him wielding a baseball bat. A simple night out turns into a tragedy wrapped up in a horrific hate crime that never needed to happen. Now Adam stands in front of a college class designed to assist students with accepting and understanding genders and sexuality. He tells them about his life with his husband Scott, how they came to meet each other and fall in love. The joy of Adam is that he retells the story to gain his own inner freedom and also keep Scott's memory alive. Adam makes sure to remind them that it is smarter to fight with their words and not their fists. He makes his way through the details of the beating of himself and murder of his husband. The most important theme is that no matter the



situation, no matter how heartbreaking it maybe they can never allow themselves to be silenced.

### **105. Breathing in An Epidemic**

The time is 1989 and set during one of the most historic epidemics in American history the rise of HIV/ AIDS. Samantha, a woman who is living with the disease shares her story of her life and how she came to be infected. She knew she was a lesbian at a young age but due to her upbringing knew she would never be accepted by her family. Her life changes the day she meets Keri Duran, real life historical woman activist for the fight of HIV/ AIDS recognition in women. Keri gave Samantha the will to fight even though she knew she was dying. Being with her and holding her hand when she was diagnosed as positive and giving her the ability to stand for something she believed in. Samantha never saw herself as a strong person until she found her voice and her ability to breathe, Keri gave her that. This story shares the life of women with HIV/ AIDS in an era when they weren't represented as people who are infected. It is a great story of solidarity and friendship and how the most influential person in our lives may be the person that randomly walks into our lives unexpectantly and stays with us forever. As Samantha writes her obituary her passion for the life, she lived is clear, hoping that someone will remember her, and she will never be forgotten.

### **106. True Painters Brush**

Radley is a man trapped in several different worlds. He is a man that grew up the child of a genius painter father and a mother suffering from schizophrenia. When his father leaves him, his mother obsesses over the dirty child that has brought this loneliness into her life. Radley was never the same. Her obsession became his and in short amount of time he became as obsessed as his mother was. Washing his hands until they bled, and viewing himself as dirty and worthless, but with this also became an obsession to create perfection which he manifests in his artwork as well as his plastic surgeries. His artwork speaks to his obsession, and it has made him famous. His obsession comes to a head when at his art gallery show his mother attends, not to support but to remind him that he is still, after all these years, nothing. In doing this the mutilation that Radley felt inside of him forces it's way out. It is not until he is forced to look at himself for who he is, not who he believes she has made him, which he begins to heal. In the end we see a broken child grow into a broken man and realize that sometimes we don't get a happy ever after because our mind won't take us there.

### **107. Back Home**

When a teenage Sophia walks into her high school calculus class it was just like any other day, until it wasn't. In the midst of last-minute cramming, she realizes that the room is nearly empty and the mood in the building is off. Students running to leave the building and others broken down into tears in the hallway, what is happening? She looks to her phone and sees four missed calls from her mother. When she finally connects with her,

her mother is in tears and screaming, warning her not to come home, they are being actively deported back to Mexico. Sophia, an only child, has nowhere to go and no one to help her. The students are separated and sent to foster homes where abuse ensues and finally Sophia decides that going back to Mexico is the best thing for her. She doesn't know if her parents are there, she doesn't know what she is going home to, but she packs her bag and sneaks away into the early morning and the heat of the desert making the trip back to Mexico on the same trip that her parents had made with her many years earlier. As she walks, the heat overcomes her. She can feel her life leaving her body and all she wants is to see her parents again. She looks for them in the heat of the sun beating down on her. She finds them off in the distance, or what she believes to be them. She uses her last piece of energy to make it to them...reaching for them...to her last breath. (**\*Actress has moments of speaking Spanish.**)

### 108. **Symphony**

Hero stands before us as a beautiful, well-put together woman in her mid-twenties. She is very well spoken and warm when connecting with the audience about her life. She is a conductor. Her love for music goes back to her mother who introduced her to classical music when she was still in the womb, but it made all the difference. When she was young, she witnessed her mother express her passion for music and express that when played correctly music was like poetry, in its finest form. Her passion for music stayed with Hero her entire life, as did the demons that afflicted her mother, or did they? As Hero continues to share her life with us, we begin to question if it is true or if it is fiction. Did she really go to college? Was she really the first woman to conduct the New York Symphony? Was any of this real or just a piece of her imagination that she captured from her mother? As the story unfolds, we learn that Hero's mother died because of her fight with paranoid schizophrenia. Hero has moments in the performance when she sees even speaks to other people who are not present to us. Even though the symptoms are there is her success as a conductor, her memory of her childhood and her present life, is it as real to us as it is for her? Is it possible to be sick with something as debilitating as paranoid schizophrenia and still stand tall at the podium and make music? As Hero conducts the passion is real. As she speaks her life is real. As she connects with the audience the story is real. But when someone is sick does truth bleed into fantasy so strongly that everyone involved is questioning, "What is real?" It is a beautiful story that makes Hero wonder if she's sick at all or if she's just a brilliant musician, creating poetry through music. It is quite glorious.

### 109. **Hero**

Joey is a young man sharing one of the most difficult stories of his life with us. He starts by telling us about his little brother Peter who is mentally delayed but that never stopped him from doing anything he wanted to do. But his favorite thing to do was to watch G. I. Joe on television and play with his Army men. He loved and appreciated the police and firemen so that when he was at the park and the sun was going down, he didn't understand why Joey was yelling at him to "stop." As Peter runs towards the police officers, who have their guns out, and are running towards him Peter has not a care in the

world. In this child like mind, he is playing the best game of cops and robbers with his hero's. As Peter plays with his toys in hand Joey tries to get him to stop running, stop moving but he runs with the greatest innocence is in the fearless mind of a child. And on that day as Peter bled to death on the playground after being shot by the police as his brother Joey held him. Peter never stopped smiling even in pain and when he took his last breath it was in that moment that he told Joey that he loved the show G.I. Joe because his brother's name was in the title. He loved his brother because he was his true hero. Told from the perspective of the older brother with flashes of his little brother constantly present we see the joy and pain of a dynamic duo where one is taken too soon and the other must pick up the pieces to be able to see the light that is always possible even when one light has been burned out.

### **110. Defender of Men**

Alexander is a man with a difficult past. He reveals that he is homeless after he talks about the zombies that he sees all around him. The people that come and go on their daily business not seeing what they are missing that is right in front of them. This idea is explored when he talks about his relationship with his father, a military man who he never felt loved him. His father blamed him for the death of his wife who did not make it out of childbirth, which he never let Alexander forget. Through the telling of the story, we learn that Alexander joins the military in hopes that he can replicate his father's success and gain his respect. But no matter what he does, his father makes it clear that it will never be enough. His efforts to gain this relationship with his father drives him to dark places he never thought he would get to and cannot come back from. After serving in the military and never getting any love from his father his life became too much for him to handle and he was diagnosed with PTSD and honorably discharged from the military. Upon his return he tries to connect with his father who continues to attack him on his present situation telling him a real man would be able to balance his life. Alexander then takes to the streets as he sees it as a better way to live than with his father and the constant hatred he would get from him. It is after he is beaten by a group of teens who try to take the one connection that he has with his father; his military jacket that gives him clarity. He realizes that what he needs to do is move on. Hopefully he'll be able to move forward, but it's a hard life he lives, however he will not be a zombie. He will live and he will keep pushing on.

### **111. Weight of the Boulder**

Raymond, an African American man stands before the audience normal enough, unassuming enough, nonthreatening enough until he begins to push a boulder. Desperately he tries to push this boulder up a hill, hoping that he can push it to the top so that in that moment when the boulder hits the top it will then roll down the other side eliminating the pressures that he feels daily. Much like the story of Sisyphus this story follows a young black man as he shares the life that he is living. One where he feels the weight of the world, represented by the boulder, on his shoulders. He wants to be successful; he sees that in his future, but only if he can break through all of the things that are standing in front of him, holding him back, pushing him down,

forcing him to go in another direction. Told so passionately it is almost poetry this young man makes the day-to-day life of a black man in Anytown, America in this day and time a story that will resonate and hopefully gain a level of understanding of what it truly means to be a young black man in America. It is a hard-hitting slice of life, a look into a world that is full of men believing they are being hunted, living with targets on their backs, still trying to push forward. Using the visual of the boulder much like Sisyphus he pushes and pushes hoping that if he works hard enough, he can save his own life. Hoping that if he tells his story loud enough someone will hear and want to lend him a hand. Hoping that before he loses his ability to fight that he makes it to the top of the hill so that the weight can be lifted, and he can be free.

### **112. Lullaby**

Mayuki is a half Japanese half American woman in her mid-twenties telling a story set in the backdrop of 1970. It is the birth of her daughter that reminds her of her childhood and how her mother affected her life. The scene opens with her holding her daughter and singing a lullaby in Japanese. It is a song that her mother sang to her all her life. It was the love that her parents had that taught her how deep love could go. She speaks of World War 2 in Japan where she was born and the time that her parents by chance met in the middle of a street in her small town. Her father was in the American military, and they saw each other and from that moment on were in love. After the war they moved to New York City where Mayuki recalls taking her first step off the boat and into America. Her memory of that day is vivid. She talks about how American's were not so welcoming to Japanese people after the war. Her mother would be accosted, but it was better and safer than the war-torn country they had left. Her memory comes to a head when she talks about the day her mother was murdered in front of her by a man who hated Japanese people. As a child it was difficult to experience but her memory is vivid of the day, she walked into the grocery store with her mother and heard her being verbally attacked that turned into them running down the street and the man following and killing her mother. The story is compelling as her memory is so clear to her because she lives this story every day. In the end she takes her daughter to the pier where she first stepped foot into America. A place where her parents fought to get her and a place that she was able to go through the worst loss of her life and still move forward.

### **113. Tears Run**

Javier is a teenage Hispanic young man standing in the office of the people that he believes have detained his father. He holds a gun to all the hostages and gives them a choice, take him to his father or die. As the story unfolds, we hear Javier's story of how he arrived in America as a six-year-old boy with his father. The trip started with his two older brothers, but they did not make it. His mother died in childbirth and the only thing that he has is his father who has now been taken away. His goal isn't to break him out, it is simply to be able to see his father again, hug him and tell him that he loves him. His story is one of passion that should make the audience

question exactly how black and white the concept of deportation is. Javier's story is compelling as his father prepares them for "the race" he finds himself reflecting on times in Mexico where he sat outside of a bar to watch the track and field events of the Olympics. This was the story that his father used to prepare them for their run, they were all preparing for the Olympics. When the night came for the run, they all got to the starting blocks and the race began. His reflection of this moment in his life is heartbreaking, he watched as his brothers began to vomit blood and have seizures. He didn't understand why they his father left them in the desert or why he was strong enough to finish the race, but they weren't. His mind is racing as he, at moments points the gun at the hostages hoping someone will take the humanity side and not the job side of their choices and let him see his father. As the police sirens approach, he realizes that he will never see his father again but he ask them if his father cried when they picked him up? If he didn't, he would cry when he found out what his son had done.

#### **114. Anatomy of Darkness**

Alejandro, a Hispanic man, sits in a hospital gown recovering from the worst life experience any father could ever live through. He tells the story of the process of setting the wheels in motion for him and his young son to be trafficked into America. The journey is well thought out with a handful of rules that they must follow; stay silent being one of them. As the story is told we see the other side of this tragic situation as told through the eyes of the driver of the big rig that is bringing them into America. These two men never encounter each other but in a split screen type performance we see both of their realities, stories and journeys unfold seemingly at the same time. No air in the rig, twice as many passengers', no light, no way out. On the other side is the silence of not asking questions, no access to the back of the truck, a family to take care of. As the story builds both men begin to see the truth of their situation for what it is, terrifying. As the trip nears its end Alejandro realizes that him and his son are not going to make it but the unknown of what might happen to his son if he lives longer is enough to make him take his sons life. While the driver makes the delivery after driving for miles listening to the passengers in the back scream and yell for their lives, he leaves the rig, calls the police and never turns back. Alejandro lives to tell his story but must forever hold with him the secret of how his son died. Many others died that day. This is a heartbreaking story of survival and what happens when humanity is challenged, set aside and sadly absent.

#### **115. Pink Roses**

Ellie is an older woman who is humming and enjoying herself as she tends to her garden. As she works with the garden something changes in her. She holds a flower in her hand, and it brings back memories that she does not want to relive but she does. She tells us of her childhood that consisted of her father constantly beating her mother. She recounts living locked up in her room behind three locks that her mother put on the door to keep her safe. But Ellie could always count on hearing her mother run out of the house and as the door slammed, she could see her from her

bedroom window sinking her hands into her garden. Until one night their fight ended with Ellie seeing her father washing blood off his hands and her mother was lying dead on the floor. It was in that moment that she lived secluded in her room as her father drunk himself to sleep nightly and she had no friends. But when her neighbor Troy begins to take interest in her, she changed, she began to grow. However, as she lets down her guard she arrives at prom and after a great night finds herself in the middle of the fight of her life during a brutal assault. She finds her way home to her drunk father who hugs her, as she stands before him bruised and bleeding and tells her she looks just like her mother. There is something about the life that the flowers give that connects her to her mother, and to her life's tragedies.

### **116. I Don't See Me**

Brian is an African American teenager who shares his frustration with the required text of his high school. When asked to reflect on the connection that he has with these men of color he doesn't see the connection. He begins to question why all the black men they study died horrible deaths. Why they aren't allowed to say the "n" word in school but the books they read have it plastered all over it. Why there are no black men that they study that weren't massacred for having a voice and using it. Why he doesn't get to read about black men like his father who is present, working, a positive role model for him and his friends, but he is not in the books, plays, history books or required reading. The positive things that his father does for him and with him, the time they spend together, the things he teaches him about being a man, and the love that he gives from a living, breathing, African American man. It is a powerful, personal, and heartfelt conversation that he has with the audience and a reflection on what young black boys see and how some of them feel. How he responds to his white classmates that are surprised by his father's presence in his life, it saddens him, but he knows the ignorance they speak is in response to the reality that the world has set on the African American father. Brian's story is one that needs to be heard so that he can be validated in the world he is living in and the social norms that he is fighting daily.

### **117. Mother Instinct**

\*This piece is written for a Korean woman but can be easily edited out to fit any race and still tell the story to the fullest.

Mi Sun stands in front of a mirror looking at her pregnant body. She is not happy about her present situation. We find out that her husband left her when he found out she was pregnant because he didn't want a child, didn't want any change. Mi Sun is adopted and talks to her adoptive mother sharing with her that she doesn't understand how a mother could give her child up. She wonders what her birth mother's mindset was to get her to do what she did. As the scene progresses Mi Sun's stress level borders on depression but she tells us she has refused medication, so she can keep her baby girl safe. Her adoptive mother tells her she is concerned

about her wellbeing. Mi Sun begins to show symptoms of a disorder called Trichotillomania, a disorder where the person pulls their hair out as a way to deal with their emotional stresses. Mi Sun does this uncontrollably throughout the performance. She finally goes into labor and the baby is born, and when she holds the baby for the first time, she begins to understand what motherhood really is...having the instinct to know that she was not ready to be a mother. She realizes that her daughter needed what she couldn't give her but hopefully someone else could. In a very emotional moment Mi Sun gives her daughter back to the nurse and instructs her to never bring her back. Sometimes the things that we want the most in our lives are out of our reach for reasons beyond us, but the strongest person is able to see and realize that they are not capable of it.

### **118. Song of Survival**

Danielle Moretti is a woman in her early thirties in Italy during World War II. She begins her story telling us about her present state, she is in a single cell in a concentration camp. The reason she gets a single cell is because she is a celebrated Italian opera singer. The story goes on to her reflecting on how her family was broken apart, the day she sang sitting with her mother on the piano for the first time, her brother being drafted, her mother running away early in the resistance to the day that the soldiers came to her village and took them captive. A beautiful moment where she saves the lives of the other people hiding by standing strong and singing to take attention off of a crying baby. She is a true fighter. Flipping pages trying to figure out what song she is going to sing that evening for the military men she must perform for. Her climax brings her back to all of the things that she has lost and how she is being rewarded for her voice but is so lonely she would rather be with her people. In the last moment she decides that she is going to sing a song that will probably get her killed. A song in Italian that was written specifically about the resistance of the Italian people during the war, but she is resolute in her decision, the last notes she will ever sing.

\*\*\*Actress will need to sing in Italian, this can be shortened within the piece to make it easier for the actress performing. \*\*\*It could also be completely cut out of the performance and still tell the story adequately.

### **119. Pure White Flowers**

Mary is a woman in her twenties walking around in circles in the white cell that she now calls home in the mental institution that she has been confined to for the past few years. She shares with her doctor the answer to his question of the day, "When do I feel my mind started to break away from me?" This question takes Mary into the story of her childhood where she was at first the only child and then her life changed when her little sister was born. Her parents started paying more attention and giving more love to her than they did Mary. Mary found herself getting her "attention" from her Uncle Ray who had moved in. A counselor at a local high school, everyone thought he could be trusted. Through the eyes of Mary, we see what she saw living on the farm, loving her little sister but not understanding what made her so special, trying to come to terms with her uncle's choice to abuse her and not her

sister and the sad reality that her parents and sister knew and turned a blind eye. Finally, Mary's mind breaks, and she finds herself playing with her sister on the highest beam in the barn a place that they weren't supposed to be. But as children do, they laughed and played and climbed until her sister Becca fell and died. Was it an accident? A push? Mary shares her honest soul with her doctor asking him to, just once before she dies call her beautiful. As beautiful as the white roses that she fell in love with at her sister Becca's funeral.

### **120. Cooked to Perfection**

In the fashion of the most perfect cooking show chef Julia Child, we have Sylvia. She is a well put together, happy, and exciting chef preparing a meal for a live studio audience. As the scene starts, she expresses some of her best secrets to hosting a perfect dinner, seasoning ideas, and other things a host with the most success would do. As the camera continues to roll, we see Sylvia come in and out of the story that changed her life. She shares how she met her husband Toby, how they fell in love and the joy they had. It is in the midst of watching her cooking her dinner for the evening that we see a side of her that she fights the entire scene to properly hide with smiles. Going back and forth from the truth of her husband's cheating and how their relationship ended. In the end we find out that what she had been furiously "cooking" the entire time was the best kept secret. Using the tools of her trade, the knives she made her career with, the kitchen she had been given to work in, the seasonings she had come to love and all the things she truly loved were wrapped up in a man that was no longer there. Her husband's infidelity affects her in such a way that they cannot share her life with him any longer. A love story of a woman scorned and how that heart break turns deadly. In the last moments she takes the "meat" out of the oven, sprinkles on the last seasonings and presents it to the in-studio audience. She has properly named it after her husband.

### **121. Wishes**

It is said that the cycle of abuse is one that can be broken if the abused realizes their power and doesn't allow it to continue. This is the story of a woman in her late teens celebrating her daughter Joy's birthday with a cake, candles and of course a song. But unlike most children's parties this one isn't attended by anyone but Jasmine because on this day every year she closes her eyes and makes the same wish of forgiveness. Having grown up in a horrific home with an abusive father who targeted her mother until she was old enough to play the role that her mother would have played. The beatings, the secrets and the wishes that never came true. But when she finds out she is pregnant she must now make decisions for her unborn child to end this cycle of abuse. With the little bit of power, she has left she makes the ultimate decision for any mother in order to save her daughter from the life that she has already lived. So, on what would have been Joy's birthday she celebrates her memory and wishes that one day she could feel like she has been forgiven for the decision that she made.



## 122. **Adventures of Moon Boy**

Billy is a man in his mid-twenties that suffers from a rare disease called Cherubism. Its main affects are that it creates a “moon” shape in the face. Some call it “Buzz Lightyear Disease. Billy was born normal but as he grew his face began to stretch and his eyes bulged which took his parents to the doctor to get the diagnoses. He stands before the audience today as he introduces himself to his classroom of students. He addresses the elephant in the room, his face. He shares the story of his father leaving, his mother becoming his world while always telling him the truth and making sure that she created a haven for him because she knew people were going to be cruel to him. It was his senior year in high school that altered his universe. The day of the senior prom he looked great, sat alone, and enjoyed his snacks and punch. Then his life changed when in the last five minutes of prom he had his first dance with a girl- just one dance, and in those five minutes his life was changed forever. When a group of boys assault him, he gives up for a moment, thinking that maybe if they beat him enough the doctors will be forced to fix the face that he has been cursed with. After spending months in the hospital, he wakes up to a new life, the one that he didn't know he would ever be able to live. This is a story of looking in the mirror and being honest about what is seen in the reflection, taking that reality, and making it work for you. It is also a story for all ages in being able to find your joy in all of life's' situations. Billy has a beautiful story, soul and to see inside of it if only for a minute is a gift to your life.

## 123. **Knit**

Brittney is a troubled woman in her early twenties who is an addict actively in recovery. She finds her courage, solace, and acceptance in a knitting class at the local church. She never shares with any of the people in the class what she has been through but rather just sits, listens, and learns how to fight her way back to a balance after the loss of her daughter. Her daughter Jasmine didn't die but rather Brittney decided to give her away after she is born addicted to the drugs that Brittney had put in her body. How could she stop the cycle? For her walking away from her daughter Jasmine was the most difficult thing she has ever had to do but like any good mother she put her child first. Through the scene she reveals her constant search for love in all the wrong places hoping to find it in a child that she doesn't know how to love until she is gone. There is something about the inner weaving of the knitting that gives her clarity. Sitting in a room full of people who have lived so much life and as they tell her how lucky she is to be young and have the chance to not make the bad decisions they made she is internally wanting to tell them that they are constantly saving her life with their acceptance, love, and wisdom. Life at times can take us on an unexpected ride but it is the recovery, living through the grief and moving forward that may be the biggest testament to life and all of our life choices. This is a story is heartbreaking for the child and for Brittney who as a child just wanted what we all yearn for, love.

## **124. Stranger**

On what seems to be a normal day a man walks into a bar and approaches another man, sits next to him, and begins a conversation, simple enough...as it seems. This is a story that crosses from one world into another when a stranger comes in and starts a conversation with someone that he knows but this man doesn't know him. As the story unfolds the stranger tells the man about parts of his history, his life, and his family. He explains to him that he is from another time where things that die live again. The stranger recounts to him a tragic moment in his life that changed him forever and he is still holding onto the guilt of it telling him that this is the reason that he can't move on with his life. In the end the stranger shares with him how he knows him. How the stranger is in fact his brother and that in a world where everyone has an opinion that they must and voice sometimes those voices become screams and decisions are made that affect people for a lifetime. In the world of the stranger all things that have died live again and he is one of them. By the end of this story, he reveals that he is sitting next to his brother that lived, because their mother experienced a tragic situation that forced her to make decisions that forever affected both brothers and the lives they are living right now. This story shows us that sometimes outside forces can come in and change our perspectives on decisions that we have made, and the decisions others have made that affect us.

## **125. For the Love of Ireland**

Miren is a lovely woman in her seventies who is preparing to give the speech of her life. She is not a politician though her story is wrapped up in the politics that plagues Northern Ireland for decades coming to a climax on January 30, 1972, with an event that came to be known as Bloody Sunday. On the anniversary of the event, she has been asked to speak as one of the only wives that is still alive from the 14 men that died that day in peaceful protest for the civil rights, they believed they deserved. Miren goes back and forth in time talking to the audience at the event and to the events leading up to that deadly day. She was a simple Irish Catholic girl that wanted a simple life but that is not the life that she got. Her husband joined the resistance, and, on this day, he didn't come. Miren made the decision not to bury him as a part of the resistance but rather keep that private though the survivors knew. For her, he was her husband, the man she'd hoped would be the father of her children- she lost all of that on that day. It was a day that she will never soon forget but on this day, she will do as she has been challenged to do, "Tell us what happened from your perspective on this day. It doesn't have to be pretty, just honest." Miren breaks her silence and tells the truth of that day for her. The activist her husband was, the organization he joined to make their life better, the government soldiers who took his life, and the reason she kept his position a secret. A love story of sorts, she never forgets him, never loves another like him, and holds his memory with her daily.

## 126. Gratitude & Affirmations

What is your purpose? Charlie Rossen is like any other man in this world. He works hard for what he believes in, dedicates his time to helping other people and has even experienced death firsthand. Charlie, a young man in his early twenties, tells the story of when he decided it was time to come out to his parents that he was gay. Is there ever a good or right time? But he knew that his mother would understand, make him cookies, and accept him for who he was. But he was disappointed to find out that this reality would turn her against him, and she would tell him to not tell his father. But the next morning he does exactly that, owning his new-found strength in who he is and feels he has always been. He then takes it one step further when he gets to school. His friends always bullied the kids that were different including the gay kids, and Charlie always did nothing- said nothing. But on this day, he stands up for one of his classmates who is too afraid to step into the shower because they are there. Charlie lets him know, he's not the only gay person in the showers. In this moment his friends turn against him and beat him with a pipe. After many months in the hospital, he recovers with a new found need to live out his purpose. He runs a food pantry that serves the homeless. The people that he feels are ignored and avoided but what he realizes is that everyone deserves to experience the gratitude of others and makes affirmations a part of his daily life because it is his purpose. Everyone has a purpose and through his experience Charlie found his.

## 126. My Life on the Ledge

Jemma, a woman in her early to mid-twenties stand before the audience on the ledge of an apartment building that she grew up in. It was the one place as a child that she felt safe. After her mother finally leaves her abusive father leaving Jemma behind, she must figure out how to maneuver her life alone. Her father was not a nice man, but Jemma was his princess, and he always treated her better than he did her mother. But as the bills pile up and he loses his grip on reality he tells her that she is no longer his princess but his wife. As the abuse ensues and the stack of bills becomes a mountain, he believes the only thing of value that he has, is his daughter. At age eight he drives her to a location, pushes her out of the car with tears in his eyes selling her to a man who traffics women and children never to be seen again. Jemma then lives a life of drugs, abuse, and unspeakable realities for many years until in a matter of seconds she sees a moment to take her freedom back, and she does. She slips out of an unlocked door and runs, runs, runs back home. She climbs to the roof of the building and for the first time in many years she takes a breath. A free and clear breath. She remembers her mother telling her that if she loos over the edge, she can see the wings of angels floating up to Heaven. Will she be able to hitch a ride on them, or will her captivity keep her balancing on the ledge for the rest of her life.

## 127. Family First

Beverly, an African American woman in her mid to late thirties is the pillar of hard work. She is presently working several jobs, taking care of her three kids and her sister's two kids while she is in rehab. This is a story of heart and embraces the importance of loving your family always no matter how difficult things may get those are the people that you hold onto the tightest. She recalls her time as a child, being homeless and the things that her family did to be able to stay together. She points out that through it all being together was the main goal. Until the day comes that they were taken away and put into the foster care system, it is this experience that keeps her working so hard to care for the five children under her care. Living in a housing project in New York the daily struggles are real, but she keeps her focus all on the kids and making sure they have what they need, and some of the they want. Working three jobs she does all that she can to keep them in after school activities so that their mind is on the positive and if anyone is going to struggle and stress it is going to be her. It isn't until a simple request from one of the kids that she must say no to does she realize that she is slowly killing herself to put her family first. It begs the question, what would you do to support your family and keeping them together? Would you go to jail, be homeless, sacrifice all the things that you've worked for? For Beverly the answer is simple, yes.

## 128. Caravan

Alejandra is a Honduran woman in her mid-fifties who is preparing for a very important visitor. On this day someone is coming to her home to interview her about the trip that she took forty years ago in 2018 from Honduras to America. She was a part of the Caravan to America, and it is now about to be added into a history book. It is very important to Alejandra that the interviewer get the story right. She tells the story of why she needed to flee her home country, the murders of her father and brothers and the day that her mother told her that she had to leave. With a backpack and a bible in hand she joined the caravan. Her story is compelling remembering all of the humanitarians who came out and fed them, gave them water and rides to get them closer to the border. The deaths and the lives of the wonderful people she traveled with. Then finally reaching the border and being detained, the detention centers and the hatred they encountered at the border. Finally, she is granted asylum only to endure more racism from American citizens who treated her like she was not welcome. The scene goes back and forth between adult Alejandra and her as a teenager on the trip to America. It is a story of courage and limitless strength that is beautifully told through the eyes of someone who never thought she was a fighter.

**\*\*\*The performer speaks Spanish within the piece, it is encouraged. The publication specifies that the actor may speak as much Spanish or as little as they may choose.\*\*\***

### 129. Defined by Talent

Victoria is a young woman who is confined to a wheelchair. She has a disease called Muscular Atrophy Type 2. It is a disease that starts at a young age 12-18 months and could possibly elevate to paralysis. For Victoria she will spend the rest of her life in a wheelchair, but like all people she has a life that she wants to live, as an actress in Los Angeles. She tells of the memories that she has when she was a child and could walk. She remembers when her legs began to give out and when her father finally left because he couldn't be the father of a child that wasn't perfect. She has an honest conversation about how she has been treated in her life. How people treat her and through humor and honesty we can experience these moments in her life. But she pressed on and fell in love with theatre and decided to make it her life. It wasn't until Los Angeles that she realizes that no one will ever see past her wheelchair. Her emotions get the best of her when she is called in for a final audition and is told that the reason, she is not getting the role is because of her wheelchair. She takes all of her emotion from years of being stared at, talked down to and left behind by her father and before she leaves the stage, she speaks her mind. It is a life changing moment for a person in her situation to share. She is just a person that is talented and happens to be in a wheelchair, but like most people with disabilities it is not what defines them or makes them who they are.

### 130. Black Blue Black

Jackie is an African American woman in her late thirties, and she is a police officer. She loves her job and takes it very seriously. A strong woman debating on taking her Sargent's test her career is on the rise and as she shoots at the range her power, expertise and dominance for her position is clear. She speaks about the experiences she has had not only as a woman but also as a woman of color in the police department. The way that men make jokes about women's bodies, the way racist comments are dismissed as a joke and people of color are expected to smile it away. The other side to her reality is that "they are who they are, and I can't change them." This attitude at times comes across as dismissive at times to the things that she sees and hears from her fellow officers. She has an experience where she is shot and the officer that saves her is one of the men that is known to be a racist. It puts her in a position of on one side of it he's a racist and on the other side he is good at his job and saved her life. As the scene progresses, she gets a call that changes her life forever, finding out that her son, which she had not spoken about, has been shot. She rushes to the scene and sees her son being worked on by the EMT's and rushed off to the hospital. In true mother form she goes to their car to follow but then sees one of the racist officers being questioned by the captain. He shot her son. It is in this moment that her will to fight turns into the blood pulsing through her veins. She goes on a verbal attack asking if he shot her son to get rid of another black man. As she awaits word on her son, she speaks of the changes she is going to make. Someone has to tell the truth of the police force and it is her time to speak.

**\*\*\*Performer needs to be African American.**

### 131. Mirror of Terror

Chanel is a young woman in her mid to late twenties that looks as though she is ten years older. Her recent life has worn on her outside and killed her spirit inside. She is in a fight for her life as she speaks openly for the first time about the psychological abuse (domestic terror) she experienced with her husband and what drove her to kill him. As she walks us through the moments of him being the perfect man, she realizes that she wasn't sure of the exact moment that his love shifted to ownership. A list: the things that she must do in order to be obedient to him. And before she saw what was coming, she found herself disconnected from the world, moved across country and completely dependent on her husband. No friends, no family only him. Watching her on camera, clocking how many minutes it took her to do things outside of the house, regulating what she cooked, and giving permission for everything from what time she woke up, to use the bathroom, counting the number of toilet tissue squares used, the way she slept to the clothes that he so properly laid out for her on a daily basis. She knew not to get out of line. Like a dog trained by her master, she feared for the hand that seemingly now gave her life. We often think of abuse only in terms of physical not realizing that the demons in our heads are just as powerful. Is she a severely abused woman or a murderer?

### 132. Laugh to Hide the Tears

Jessi is a wonderful young woman in his mid-twenties. She has been deaf since she was ten years old. She transitions between her present age and her younger self so that she can share her story from the perspective of how she saw it as a child. She was born with Autism and was diagnosed when she was two. This was something that created a challenge within the relationship of her mother and father, but they managed to stay together and fight through it. But at the age of ten she began to show signs that something else was wrong with her. She is soon diagnosed with Acoustic tumors. They were growing on her brain and when they were removed it also caused hearing loss. Through her story she tells us how she fought through her Autism and learned how to speak the only way she could, through sign language. Her spirit is that of a fighter, but her parents begin to feel the pressure of not being able to handle her diagnosis not realizing that she is actually thriving. It all comes to a halt when her father commits suicide from the pressure of not being able to help her. She is present with him when he takes his own life, stays with him until her mother returns and has forever been changed by the experience. Her story is one of heart and gives a better understanding for the things that we take for granted and don't truly appreciate. **(\*This story can be performed by any performer. The writer gives this permission. Also, this character must be able to do sign language.)**

### 133. Replacement

The loss of a child is a difficult experience to process even when that child never takes a breath. For this father it is that much more difficult because he is the son that

he always wanted to go with his wife Janet and their three daughters. It is after this loss that he hears about adopting a child and after much deliberation they decide to go through the process. Months later they bring home six-year-old Scotty, and in that moment everything in their life's changes. Seth immediately falls in love with Scotty, his son. They do father son things, they bond, and he gives him all the love that he feels like his son should have. It is not long after the adoption that things begin to go wrong. Scotty begins acting different, lying to his teachers, leaving school, lying on his sisters for attention from Seth, something is wrong. After an in-depth conversation with the social worker, they find out Scotty's full past: the abuse he endured and witnessed, and Janet is afraid. But Seth's love is unwavering, and he believes that his son would never hurt them. Eventually neighbors begin to complain about missing animals, and this makes Janet take the girls and leave and Seth investigate. He finds the evidence he needs and calls the social worker to put Scotty in a mental health care facility, not back in the system. He had failed another son, but he was determined to help Scotty even if he knew he had to do it from a distance. In the end Seth gets his family back and Scotty is getting the help that he needs at a hospital and like a good father Seth made sure that he did the right thing. Though he feels like he let his son down he realizes that sometimes you have to do the wrong thing for the right reasons to save the lives of those you love.

### **134. Unbroken**

**\*Please see note from writer on ability to change race of performer. \***

Ping is a young Asian American man who has a deep-rooted love for musicals. Not for the story and not for the music but for the connection that it has created between him and his sister that he has not seen in years. It was the comfort that it made him feel brought him out of his shell but the moment that his sister put him in that yellow dress he felt, whole. He couldn't find the words to explain how wearing this dress made him feel but it was in this moment that he had found his comfort in life. His story is one of fighting at a young age to be the person he had always known himself to be. Through his beautifully told story we see the most intimate pains of a person who was able to maneuver one of the most challenging fights of their life, gaining acceptance for who they are. Ping was a gay man living in a country that was not accepting of him even as a young boy just playing dress up. But it is after his father publicly beats him and he is put in a conversion therapy hospital, to "fix him," that his sister decides enough is enough. She convinces his mother to get him out of there and the three escape to America. It is then that she leaves him for good to figure out how to maneuver this life on his own. Their bond is the most important love of his life that allowed him to finally be able to then love himself freely. Freely love the life he's allowed to have as a gay Asian man in America. The life that he found himself fighting for at a young age. The life that he never thought he would be able to live... his own life, in freedom. **(\*This story is a universal story. The race of the performer may be edited to reflect a different race as needed; the writer gives permission for this.)**

### 135. Blood on These Hands

Cali is a young woman in her early twenties who puts a lot of work into her paintings. We see her painting in the opening of the scene, to watch her double over in pain from the ringing in her ears. She is deaf. Through her story we find out that she is, as her mother always told her "Slow." When her mother gives birth to a little boy Cali get so be the big brother, but she also has someone she can play with that is on her same level. She loves playing with him. She is the best big sister she has the ability to be. Through a series of flashbacks, we see her younger playing and bonding with her little brother, but we also see her in her world. She is behind on things; his mind doesn't work as it should at her age, but she never lets that slow her down. One day she is playing cops and robbers and she is the cop. She fills her water gun in the sink and begins to look for her brother and in her mother's room under the bed she finds a gun and decides that it would be so much more fun to play with Mom's gun. She finds her brother, shoots him, and doesn't understand why he is all red. The close shot of the gun takes her hearing, and she regains her ability to communicate by learning sign language. She now paints pictures of all red. The memory of what her mind sees on that day. The constant ringing in her ears reminds her of what happened but also of the presence of her brother, even if it's only through the pain and the paint he will never be forgotten as one of best friends. Within the piece the actor transitions between being an adult and being a child at different ages in her memory. (**\*Performance may be done by any gender student with the permission of the writer. The actor will have to do sign language throughout, but amount is up to the performer.**)

### 136. Federal Blvd.

Manny is a Mexican young man trying to make sense of his life in America. His parents worked to get him and his brother Alejandro to America but all they have is each other. It was their life's goal, for their children to live a life full of choices and the possibility of education. But it was this motivation that pushed him through his life. A life that was wrapped around his relationship with his big brother Alejandro. After as children they experience their parents being detained and deported as they hid in a crawlspace, all Manny had was his brother Alejandro. He became his mother, father and big brother working from age nine to pay for all of the things Manny needed for school. Get an education, that was the goal, that was his focus. Growing up with an Aunt Alejandro immediately took on the role of father because he knew that was his job as his big brother. But on Friday nights, every Friday nights the brothers went to Federal Blvd. a place where they could go ad be surrounded by their culture: Mexican food trucks, vendors selling out of their cars and at tables on the streets, blocks, and blocks of the closest feeling of home. Fifteen years of Federal Blvd with his big brother until the night that ICE agents raid the street, the same night Manny tells Alejandro he is on schedule to graduate two weeks later. He must watch his brother be violently arrested, as well as Manny himself but only Alejandro was undocumented and both boys knew that. Manny had officially lost everyone in his immediate family. This is an immigrant story that is two brothers who only had



each other, until they didn't. Finally, Manny puts on his cap and gown and accepts that he has to take this next step in his life, but it is heartbreaking that he has to do it alone. For his family, he will push forward.

**\*Performer must be able to speak Spanish. This is also a story that could be told by a male of female performer, with writer permission.**

### **137. Listen to Me**

Ann is a seemingly happy and wonderful small-town girl with an electric personality. The audience enjoys her smile and the love she has for her son Jessie who she rocks in her arms at the beginning of the scene. Ann then tells us about the struggles of growing up in a small town where everyone knows everyone, but no one ever really listens. She is initially excited and shares this joy with her husband but as time passes and her body begins to change, and hormones take over she begins to feel emotions that she never thought possible. She is in a constant state of panic and fear. Fear for the health of her baby, is she doing everything right, will the baby be okay, what if the baby is sick and she doesn't know it. Her body becomes an unhealthy place for the baby and as much as she begs for help from her doctor, her mother, and her husband everyone around her continues to tell her to calm down and relax. Often, we don't realize the pain someone else is in because when they speak about it, we aren't truly listening. Ann must come to terms with her pregnancy, even if she has to do it alone. She now speaks to us about the struggles of Post- Partum Depression and that it is a real illness because she had it. And though her episode was different from most, and the results of her non diagnoses for so many months affected her for the rest of her life she is still able to share her story. Her son Jessie is born, and she wants to love him but can't. She wants to be a mother to him but can't, and in a series of unbalanced moments of the severe depression things happen that she can never forgive herself for nor can she ever take back. But through years of full-time mental care, medication and psychological support Ann can tell us her greatest story of gaining all that she wanted in the world and then losing it forever.

### **138. River Leads Home**

In Mexico the drug cartels have more power than anyone can really understand. Valeria is a Mexican woman and knows the cartel and their power very well as her husband traffics drugs from Mexico to America for them. It has never been a choice, but rather something that he had to do in order to stay alive and for his wife and sons to not be murdered as well. The fear tactics that the cartel uses are what makes Valeria and her husband Hector decide that they cannot risk the lives of their two sons. One has already lost a limb because Hector asked to leave the business, the cartels answer was very clear. Valeria trained for weeks, carrying an 85-pound backpacks on her chest and her back walking for hours around their home. They didn't know of any other way to live other than separating their family for the sake of the children. Valeria left with their youngest son Javier and began to walk the same trail that Hector walked on his trips. She makes it to the final crossing at the

river and begins to celebrate by enjoying some time playing in the river. Before she knows what is happening Javier goes under in the current and she can't find him and doesn't find him. She decides she cannot leave and go back to Mexico or forward to America without him. She decides to live on the banks of the river, with a room set up for when she finds Javier. The heartbreak of a mother and the things she is willing to do to keep her children safe are what makes Valeria's story so touching. On the banks of this river is where her son lives and when the moment comes that she finds him again she must decide which side of this river to take him, which place is home.

### **139. Impact Statement**

The violence that has plagued America when it specifically comes to African American men is at an all-time high at present. When Craig, a grieving father stands before us sharing his story about the memories of his son it is heartbreaking. For him his son was a superstar, a great kid, a teenager on his way to a life of success. But to the police officer who accidentally shoots him, it feels as if he becomes just another black man in the wrong place at the wrong time, which has become an unacceptable, yet normalized answer. It is a difficult story to hear but one that revolves around a reality that is also difficult for people to except: the first thing that people see is color, sometimes unfortunately that is the only thing that people see. How do you reflect on biases in life, or do you even realize that as human beings we have them? How does one deal with the death of a child who is murdered at the hands of the very people that we are always taught to trust? How does a grieving father move forward with everything important to him is living in the past and only in his memory? Markus Wesley is one of so many African American men who were defenseless in the midst of bullets the word directed at them that should not have been. A true testament of where we are in America right now in 2019 in the story that should leave us all questioning if this is our present what does our future look like?

### **140. Tales of a Survivor**

We cannot know the most difficult moments in our lives until we are faced with them. This can be said for Haven, a mother in her 30s who is now faced with the most difficult time of her life, which makes her very angry and distraught because her life had already been a difficult road to travel. Being raised in a single-parent household because her father was in prison, Haven struggled with what love meant. She got used to spending time visiting her father in jail and only knowing his voice through the phone and in letters. As life moved forward, her brothers decided to follow in her father's footsteps saying that this is the life they had to live because it is the only life that they knew. Haven felt differently, she wanted to give her children everything that she didn't have and be everything that her parents were not. Unfortunately, life shows us that it is more probable that we will be just like our parents rather than being nothing like them. Now she finds herself a single mother with a husband who is spending the rest of his life in prison and her bundling up the children every weekend to go and visit him, as the cycle repeats. It is not until she receives a devastating diagnosis that she must reflect over her life, accept

everything that it was, everything that it is, and question if she has the strength to push through. Even though she is going through a rough time, she still wants the best for her kids and will literally give her life to ensure that.

#### **141. In This Moment**

Jennifer is a young woman in the midst of preparing for her wedding day. She shuffles through a closet looking for the items that she needs to make this day the most special day it could possibly be. She tells us how special the relationship is with her and her father, and in the midst of that tells us of the loss of her mother in a tragic car accident. Getting married without her mother is difficult, but also having her father refuse to attend is a heartbreaking realization. Jennifer is marrying Samantha and her father doesn't support it. She never goes into details about his reasons why, just that in order to love who she loves she has to let go of someone else she loves. A father who was her everything and who changed his life to make sure she was taken care of when her mother died. This is an emotional story about a woman on her wedding day coming to terms with the fact that the two people who she loves most may never meet each other and that she may have to walk herself down the aisle, an emotional reality. It is a fun and honest glimpse into what it means to love and how difficult it is to move forward when *In This Moment* all she wants is...her perfect everything. Love is love, between a child and her father and mother but also between that one person that gives your smile a new meaning.

#### **142. No Regrets**

Sydney Jacobson speaks to us on the day of her execution. Sharing us a story of heartbreak and love. The unconditional relationship that she had with her best friends at seventeen years old has put her where she is today. She recounts the days leading up to the moment that changed her life. The focus of her story is to remind us of all that as teenagers we make bad decisions and sometimes those decisions have the power to affect us as adults. Her story reminds us that the best thing we can do presently for ourselves as adults is to teach our young people that all their decisions have consequences. And that sometimes in the eyes of the law age doesn't justify or excuse a choice that they have made. Sydney loves her friends and when one of them is hurt a harsh decision is made to retaliate. What happened is not something that she can fix, or apologize away, but rather a decision that changed the rest of her life. In many ways she stopped living life as she knew it that night and started living in the reality that she wishes she could take back. But through her years of experience the one thing that Sydney recognizes is that she can't that one thing she can't do his regret, because you can't change it, you just must learn how to except and live with it.

#### **143. Quinceañera**

Nina is a fifteen-year-old Hispanic girl who is nine days away from her *quinceañera*. She talks to her friend about how excited she is about the event and her first dance with her father. But everything is gest turned upside down when she gets word that her father has

been arrested by ICE agents and is in the process of being deported. She rushes home to her mother and siblings. This situation makes no sense, he is a good man who has only done good things since his arrival into America. Was he there illegally? Yes, but he had made himself and his family positive members of society and his reason for bringing them there was a noble one, to get his two eldest children the health care they needed to fight a difficult disease. Nina experiences an emotional roller coaster as her mother attempts to comfort her and they all try to understand how they will be able to move forward, but Nina announces her *quinceañera* is off if he cannot be there for their first dance. This is a truly beautiful coming of age story about the strong connection a young girl has with her father. **\*Character will speak Spanish throughout the performance.**

#### 144. *My Last Ride: Selma, AL 1965*

Viola Liuzzo is a little known white Civil Rights worker. She dedicated her life to being an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement marching beside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, as well as his wife Coretta. Her story is one of courage and bravery as she packs her suitcase, loads her car, and says goodbye to her husband and five children on her way to Selma, AL to march. This march was the same and yet very different from others. Coming on the heels of the murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson civil rights workers converged on Selma for a march. It was to be peaceful but resulted in what is now historically known as “Bloody Sunday.” Viola had a job to do, she used her car to shuttle the civil rights workers to their boarding houses as well as to locations where cars and busses were converging to take people home. But on this night, she did not make it. She was gunned down in her car while doing what she felt was her job to do, helping her black counterparts gain the rights that she was born with. This is a beautiful story of love and loss realizing that there are and have always been people out there that are willing to stand next to someone that is very different than them and risk their lives all in the name of freedom. Sometimes these people are complete strangers out on the protest lines, that become the lines of injustice the person next to you becomes your brother and sister no matter what they look like. **\*This is fan fair and is not autobiographical information.**

#### 145. Cupcakes

Kristen is at her core a fighter. On a seemingly normal morning she gets up, gets ready for work and heads off to her dream job as a kindergarten teacher. Her story is one that revolves around something that people do on a daily basis, make quick decisions. Unfortunately, Kristen made one that will forever affect her life. She wakes up months later after being in a medical induced coma to be given all of the information that is now a reality she must accept: her husband has left her and because of her snap decision she has completely lost her hearing. Some people wouldn't know what to do next, but Kristen decided that the only thing she can do is whatever it takes to get back to her students. She commits herself to rehabilitation as well as learning sign language. Making sure that she is standing in front of her students showing them what perseverance looks like. Sadly, when she is ready to return to work, she is told by her principal that her present situation is not what is best for the students. Her heart is broken. Biases and discrimination towards people with disabilities is an unacceptable practice that needs light shined on it.

Kristen fights for her job, fights to see her students, and must accept that her quick decision- returning home to grab her student's cupcakes- will forever be in her mind. A moment she doesn't regret, anything to make her students smile.

\*The student performing this will need to be able to do a minimal level of solid sign language.

#### 146. **Black Atlanta Children Are Being Murdered**

Sharon is an African American woman in her late forties. She stands in her childhood home looking around the room and sharing the memories of her childhood in that room. She remembers her and her brother's watching television, playing tag with her friends and the moment that their friends started to be murdered. She speaks in depth of the Atlanta Child Murders that happened in Atlanta in 1979-1981. Black children in her neighborhood were being kidnapped and murdered at an alarming rate, unfortunately for a long time it was only alarming to the black people that lived in that neighborhood. She talks about the idea of American history continuing to repeat itself and at the lack of basic appreciation for the lives of black people. She recounts the difficulty of just being a normal kid in a time like this and how this experience affected her life and the lives of her brothers in a negative way. Her story is raw and heartfelt as we realize that what she reflects on now is just another page in our history of the dismissal of black lives. A beautiful story of how survival can always sit on your shoulders and weigh you down as you remember the people who died. **\*Performer must be African American, but pronouns could be changed to be male or female with the writer's permission. This character is fiction.**

#### 147. **Watching the Dominoes Fall**

Shelby is a young woman who a short time ago was living her normal life to the fullest. It is her senior year of high school, and she is preparing for her role of Gertrude in "Hamlet." She's a theatre kid. She sees theatre as her safe space, a place where everyone is accepted and appreciated for who they are. So much so that she considers her theatre group her family. It is moments in our lives when we are not even thinking that in a moment's notice everything can change, and it did. When one of the other theatre students shares his love for another and it is not a mutual feeling. Justin disconnects from reality. He obsesses over the love he has for Cynthia so much so that he brings a gun to school- into their theatre class. Shelby recounts everything that leads up to the mass shooting as well as her time after. The recovery. The guilt of being alive while juggling the hate she has for Justin and the anger that she can't shake. Shelby's life is very different now. After being shot in the face she lost her hearing and had to learn how to do so many things over again. Learning to swallow the right way and all things after were a challenge that she overcame. Learning sign language is now what she spends a lot of her time focusing on, a step forward so she can own her life again, a piece she had lost in her theatre class that day. A story of a strong person, fighting the most difficult fight of her life, figuring out how to live again when surrounded by death.

**(\*The performer can be anyone, but they will need to do some basic sign language.)**

#### 148. Reborn

The greatest loss in the world is the loss of a child. For Jaqueline, an African American single mother, it is the murder of her son Sean. She wakes up one morning and while she spends time in her room she sees “something” on his bed. She picks it up, examines it and shares it with the audience. She speaks about the loss of her first child then the loss of her daughter. All she had left was her son Sean. As she continues to examine the “thing” she presses a button that takes her on a trip that gives her exactly what she thinks she wants, her son back. Sean is dead but, in this moment, he reappears as if nothing has happened, kisses her and is off to school. But the phone call comes, and his death comes, and she is left trying to figure out how she can get this right. How can she communicate with this “thing” that what she wants is her son back, but she wants him to live his full life? What we realize through this difficult story of loss is that as humans we must be able to accept the things we cannot change. But if given an opportunity to relive the worst day of your life and change it, would you? Or would you know enough about life and how life works to know that there is a reason that no one has the power to do that. Jacqueline is eventually forced to confront her ghosts, quite literally, and make the most difficult decision in her life not only for herself but for total strangers. Sometimes doing what feels right is offset by what is right. A story of a mother’s experience with love, loss and law enforcement.

#### 149. Hopes and Dreams

Isidora is a beautiful, talented and smart Mexican American young woman. She stands before us with a long scar on the side of her face, a part of a memory that she would rather not speak of nor relive. She tells us her parents’ story of coming to America and how she spent all of her life making sure she was being a role model for her younger siblings while preparing herself for college. America was a scary place for her, and especially her parents. They feared that all of the things they had worked to escape in Mexico were all things that were still very possible here in America. But Isidora worked hard to gain their trust so that when she chose a large out of state school for college her parents would give their blessings. With much conversation they finally did but with that consent came a list of protocols to keep her safe, rules to be followed and Isidora happily complied. There is always that one night, the one night in our lives that a simple missed step changes the course of everything we knew to be true. On that night Isidora experiences a brutal attack that leaves her fight in for her life and blaming herself for the choice that she made. What we learn from her story is that sometimes within the best intentions a tragic situation can still arise. Isidora shows us that even during the worst nightmare of our lives we can still come out, thriving, healthy and working to still make our part of the world a better place. A different kind of survival story that is dipped in the reality that we all make small mistakes that can derail our life, but it is in the recovery that our persistence is truly shown. (**\*This character speaks minimal Spanish, and the story could be cut to present her as any ethnicity.**)

## 150. Sometimes I Don't Understand

Jake is a normal seventeen-year-old kid except that he is developmentally behind because of a situation at birth. He is aware of who he is and what happened to him. He explains to the audience how his accident happened and that his mom tells him that there are things that he sometimes doesn't understand. What we find out through the events of the story is that he actually does understand. He understands that his mind doesn't work like everyone else's. He also understands that his parents don't want to take care of him for their rest of their lives. Jake is very aware but often gets ignored for what he does know. The highlight of Jake's life is his twin brother Jessi. Jessi was born with no difficulties, and he is a great big brother to Jake. There is a moment on their eighteenth birthday that Jessi decides he is going to celebrate it alone, for the first time without Jake. As Jake waits in the car, then walks to the Burger Hut to find Jake eating their birthday dinner alone he is heartbroken. When Jessi tells him he just has to get over it, Jake takes what his says literal. Overhearing his parents say that they don't want to care for him forever, he also takes that quite literally. Jake does in fact understand but there are things that he translates incorrectly. When his mind tells him that no one loves him, there is no reason for him to live, he takes that and puts it into action. This story should bring light to the fact that people who are different from us are still people and that words have meaning, and they matter. Jake is a wonderful young man who wants nothing more than to be loved by the people he calls family, unconditional, full time, family love.

## 151. *First Life Decision*

"Man" is like no one we have ever seen or experienced. He/ She represents the future of what the world as we know it will be. He has chosen to visit "The Unborn" which is an office that you can go to in order to see three major events in your life. Once you finish you get the chance to decide if you really want to be born. Are the things that you just experienced, that you know for a fact you cannot change or avoid, so terrifying that you choose to not experience living at all? It is a story of life and the life experience that at one time or another all of us wished we could experience. Having hindsight. Knowing what is coming around the corner before it comes. Being able to walk into a situation with the knowledge that it is going to forever change who you are, but you had the ability to prepare yourself for it. Or the other side, the thought of waiting for these things to happen, stressing about these experiences that are in some cases tragic is overwhelming in a way you've never known. For "Man" when he experiences his "Good, bad and ugly" moments of his life he is left with knowledge but also with a sick feeling in his stomach because now he has the most important decision to make: live or die? What would you choose? Or would you want to see what your life's cards said before making that decision? An emotional rollercoaster in the fashion of a time machine of life. Get on the ride- or not... but might regret the experience either way. Emotionally charged with the challenge of acceptance for a future that you have not yet had the joy or sorrow to live.

## 152. **Deepest Darkest Secrets**

Sometimes the jobs that people decide to do are chosen because their life experiences have pushed them in a specific direction. This is the case for Emiliano, who is a therapist. He works with children and people who have experienced childhood trauma: physical, sexual, and emotional. As the scene begins, he shares with us his deep connection to his nephew, the person that he believes saved his life and gave him a reason to push forward with his life. His story or abuse goes even deeper when he remembers the moment that he shared with his mother that the abuse was happening and instead of saving him she turned the other cheek. His one support was his sister. She loved him and tried to help him as much as she could but when the time came for her to leave the house, she promised him that she would always be there for him. His goal was to hold on and make it to the year that he too would be able to leave, but she decided. Once the abuse stopped Emiliano decided he was going to live his truth and tell his mom at age sixteen that he was gay. In a surprising turn of events, she was angrier with him in this moment than she had ever been with herself. Moments later she kicks him out of the house, and in that moment, he realized that this was his freedom moment. He no longer had to hold his deepest darkest secrets in those hidden places. He left the house and started walking. Walking away from the horror. Walking towards his freedom. He found his purpose in helping others and now he saves lives every day.

## 153. ***Just Enough***

Shu-Hui, a young Taiwanese woman in her early twenties shares her story of triumph when her family moves from Taiwan to America. Her family is successful, wealthy, doing all the things that they had hoped they would be able to do. The major setback for her begins when her father tells her and her sisters that they have to change their names to something, "American." His hope is that this will stop his children from being seen as different. However, Shu-Hui doesn't want to change her name and she doesn't want to blend in she wants to be exactly who she has always been; a woman from Taiwan who now lives in America. Her story is one that could be told by many different people from many different backgrounds. The idea of being accepted in a country that is not your own. The concept of not wanting to leave behind who you were for the sake of who you are becoming. All she wants is to be loved and for people not to look at her and assume that she is from a country she is not from. It is not acceptable for her to allow people to put her in a box that she does not belong in. As she watches her older sister lose her identity within a relationship, she promises that she will never do the same. However, as life would have it the person that she falls in love with is not the person that she thought he was. When faced with the choice of being who she truly is or being who he has asked her to be Shu-Hui must make one of the most difficult decisions in her life; lie about her heritage that she loves so much or walk away knowing that exactly who she is should always be enough. **\*Character within this text is Taiwanese. They do not speak it and script could be adjusted to be from a different small Asian country.**



#### 154. *Fault or Forgiveness*

Yanelli is a woman in her early twenties who has lived a difficult life full of challenges that all stemmed from her childhood. Being raised in a household with three younger brothers where at times she felt like she was the parent because their actual parents were both alcoholics. Not only did they drink but they also found themselves often in verbal and physical battles that their children had to hide from. Having experienced homelessness, struggling just to get by and often using their imagination as an escape Yanelli forged through. Unfortunately, for Yanelli she found herself the sister, mother and safety net to her younger brothers. Doing everything in her power to hide the truth, and make sure that they knew they were loved. Eventually however, her brothers were old enough to realize exactly what was happening. A story of heroism wrapped up in a young girl who was able to rise above a negative situation and thrive. She found her freedom in an unlikely source when her father, after getting out of prison finally finds sobriety and his joy. Not only does he stop drinking but he completely changes his life for the sake of his children. On this day she reflects on the family that she has, the person that she has become, while honoring her father who she blamed but is now able to forgive.

**\*Character seeks Spanish but can be edited out if the performer chooses.\***

#### 155. *Through Dolls*

Jordan looks like any other girl except there is something about her presence that is a little off. She stands in a room full of dolls. There are moments when she talks to herself, giving herself affirmations and the energy to just push forward. She tells the audience her story of survival even though she doesn't see herself as a survivor. It is difficult for most people to understand the challenges of someone who has been through what Jordan has been through, as a woman who has survived an abduction. The situation was mentally and physically crippling. Jordan shares with us the coping mechanisms taught by her therapist that have gotten her where she is today. Speaking in front of group of strangers, hoping that something that she says will make a difference in their lives as well as bring balance and sanity back to hers. However, Jordan is not the only person present. The more she gets into her story the more she can't handle the pressure of sharing with the audience the things that she endured while in captivity. To balance that strain Jordan created other personalities to assist her in carrying the weight of the life she was forced to live. Some of these people are nice, some of them are funny and some of them you're just trying to be helpful. The one thing that we learn from Jordan's story is the amount of physical and mental pain that one can endure before finally saying enough is enough. A beautiful story of struggle told through the eyes and a woman who is truly a survivor. Through her and her massive collection of dolls that give her the voice to tell the story we learn what it really means to come out and fight your way back to balance on the other side of tragedy.

### 156. *Fight of Ghosts*

Jason is a young man in his mid-twenties. He rides around on his skateboard that he prefers as a mode of transportation. It is more than just a skateboard it is a connection to his father who has passed away. Jason begins to speak using sign language then realizes that the audience doesn't know what he's saying. He takes us on a trip from age three to adulthood with his board and his father. The days when he took being able to hear for granted and the decision to join the military because after the loss of his father, he just wanted to get away and find his place again. Unfortunately, he didn't realize that with joining the military comes the possibility of going to war, which is exactly where he went. It is at war that he found great friends and began to come to terms with his father when the tank he was riding in is hit by a missile. It is in this tragic event that he loses his hearing and his way, but Jason believes that it is in this moment that he hears from his father again. He tells him that he has to get up, find his way, and never give up. A story about the connection to a parent and how even after death the connection is just as strong as it was the day we are born. Though on a board, Jason finds his footing, his new life and himself after the tragedy of death and war.

### 157. *Counting the Days*

Veronica is a young Latinx woman in her early 20s. We watch her as she prepares lunch for her brother and sister that she now cares for. It is in this moment that she looks on the refrigerator to see a calendar, for some a calendar is just a collection of papers with different days and months on them but for her and her family it is a connection to the parents that she lost years ago. And for this story Veronica quite literally lost them. When the cartel comes to her small Mexican town and forces all of the people there to allow them to use their land for trafficking it angers Veronica. She expresses to her parents how unfair their treatment is, how they are bullies and how the town needs to fight back. But in the true words of a teenager, she has no idea how difficult the situation really is. However, her father makes a decision for the family to escape to America. The preparations are simple, and the plan is very direct just keep moving, never stop. Simple directions that will play into the outcome of this decision and change Veronica's life forever. Unfortunately, on their trip they become separated, and she finds herself in America taking on the responsibility of raising her little brother and sister as they patiently count the days on their calendar of how long their parents have been gone. A story of survival and strength that reminds us of all that we have no control over how much our lives will change or how strong we really are when we truly put our families first.

### 158. *Rollercoaster*

Starr is a beautiful woman who finds herself sitting on the witness stand fighting not only for her present life but for her future. Looking out over a crowd of her family members who support her, the judge and jury that she is speaking passionately too and on the other side of the courtroom is her ex-husband is present. Having the right to stand before his accuser she speaks to him candidly and about him. This man she chose to marry who abused her and put her in this position. She takes her time in detailing and explaining the

things that happened to her in their abusive marriage while also making it a point to remind everyone that unfortunately it is difficult and sad, but our truth is that women are often not believed. It took her many years to gain the courage and strength to walk out but as she has walked into this courtroom, she realizes that it's possible that the things her husband drilled into her head are true. That she will never be able to escape him, no one will ever believe her crazy stories, and that just like all other women she is not to be trusted. This is a story reflects on the idea that being a victim is difficult in and of itself but made a thousand times more traumatic when the victim finally finds the strength to speak, and no one will listen. **\*This performance comes with two ending options for the performer to choose.**

### *159. Soli*

Some would agree that the love that a mother has for her children is something that is universal no matter where on this earth that woman resides. This statement could not be truer for Evalynn Okolie a Mid-Nigerian woman in her mid-sixties. She is a single mother after she loses her husband to diabetes. She has two sons that she loves with everything that she has and like a mother bear her goal is to keep them safe. In Nigeria the belief is that if you have white skin, you are worth more than gold. When Evalynn's son Soli was born and came out with no pigmentation his father shunned him, wanted to sell him, didn't want any of the neighbors to know he existed and tried to get rid of him, but she saw him as a gift from God and would have none of it. She went out of her way to keep him hidden for worries that someone would kidnap him and sell him. Home schooled him, for years not allowing him to go outside at all, lied to him about why saying that his white skin would burn in the sun. But like all maturing children Soli gets curious, he ventures outside to find that she was wrong, his skin didn't burn and slowly Evalynn began to allow him to go outside with his big brother, do normal things, she let her guard down. But when Soli goes missing Evalynn's heart is broken. She searches for him and spends the rest of her life blaming herself. How do you fix the pain that a mother feels when she feels that she has failed at her one job... to be the protector. **\*The actress in this performance must be of African descent.**

### *160. Not My Father's Son*

Trey, a young African American single father stands before the judge and a packed courtroom holding his newborn son in his hands. The love this has for this child is clear from the opening moment. He is in court today to fight for custody of his son. The mother died in childbirth, but the court is questioning Trey's ability to care for his son as a single father. Trey stands in front of the court making sure to note that his lawyer wanted to prepare him for this speech, but he wanted to speak from his heart. He tells the story of his childhood where his mother and himself were abused by his father. He thought this was how all fathers were until he told his friends and realized that it was just him. Though he never understood why his father was the way he was Trey turned his focus as a kid on making his mom happy. One day he came home from school and his father had packed up and left but not before a violent attack on his mother. Telling the judge that is this moment he knew he would

never be that kind of son, father, or man to anyone in his life. For many years his father stayed away, almost to a point of forgetting about him, but on his graduation day his father shows up, and it is in this moment that Trey can say and do all of the things that he always wanted to say and do. After a very honest and emotional conversation Trey accepts that he is the man he knew he would become. Will the court allow him to take his son home, or will the sins of his father stop him from being the father he is destined to be?

### **161. *To Save a Life***

Dom is an African American man in his late twenties who finishes up on the final touches of a poster he is working on. He is preparing to attend a protest this morning but first he must get his brother Kev up and ready for school. Dom is not only Kev's brother, but he's taken on the responsibility of being his father as well. Dom shares with us his history of bad decisions that started by following his two older brothers who were the only example he had in the inner-city streets of Chicago. On the poster he has a picture of Kev at fifteen next to him at fifteen. He reflects on the reality that at fifteen he was carrying a gun and doing all the wrong things, but that change is possible. After the tragic murder of his two brothers, he immediately decides that in order to save Kev's life he has to be a better example. At a young age he builds a plan with his mother to get them out of Chicago and into a place where Kev can be safe. They will not bury another child. He found himself as a teenager taking on the role of being a father/ big brother to his little brother. This is a story of triumph in a search for understanding. Dom desperately wants to make a better way for Kev hoping that if he can change, that others who drown themselves in the stereotypes of the black man can change as well. That Kev might have a chance to be judged on his merit, his worth, and the great person that he is...the fight continues.

### **162. *Science of Fear***

A scene that opens with a woman standing next to herself in a coma, all she can do is wonder, "How did I get here?" When Mia, an African American woman, woke up this morning the only thing on her mind was the interview she had that morning to be an administrator in training at her high school. She is a dedicated science teacher with a husband and teenage son. As she prepares for her interview her joy for the job and her life is clear. After the interview is a success, she rushes home to share the information with his family but locks her keys in her car. As she looks around her car for a way in, asking her neighbor to call her husband for a second set she decides to check the backdoor, unknowingly making the biggest decision of her life. With her hand on the back door, she is told that a gun is pointed at her and to raise her hands. In that moment she freezes and the only thing her mind can process is science. She begins to define terms, not raising her hands, more definitions, not raising her hands, in this most fearful of moments her mind isn't working- not the way it should. She finds herself being struck on the head with the butt of the gun. On the ground she bleeds trying desperately to figure out what she did wrong in coming

to her home, to celebrate. A story that dives deep into the importance of de-escalation rather than violence and the love that a woman has for her family and her students. Will she ever wake up from her coma to share how in the scariest moment of her life, science is what brought her solace? Never say what you would do... this story is a testament to realizing that you honestly will never know until you find yourself frozen and only focused on the elements of life.

### **163. Just Perfect**

Cicely is an eighteen-year-old woman working an evening shift at her fast-food job that she hates. But it is in what has happened to her that we see that the work she is doing now is just a step in what she has coming next. She is a mother to her little brother Timmy who lives with Autism. For over a year she ignored that Timmy was different. There were telling signs and situations that should have led her to get him tested or get him assistance but as time passed, she ignored and did nothing. Finally, the family doctor told her that he needed to be tested and after the diagnosis she decided what was best was for Cicely to either become his mother or go out at a then fifteen years old and live her best life. Cicely refused to leave her little brother not knowing what was going to happen to him, so she did the only thing she knew to do, she worked. Stepping into the role of his mother she read books, websites, did all the research she could do to have a better understanding of how Timmy's mind worked and how she could forever connect with him. It all worked and on her eighteenth birthday she served her mother with custody papers asking her to sign over her parental rights to Timmy. The only thing she wanted was an opportunity to tell her face-to-face what her decision to stop being a mother did to her children. In a beautiful moment of adulthood, Cicely confronts her mother on the bad decision that she made. But she also tells her that had that not happened she wouldn't now be a mother of the most wonderful kid in the world, her little brother Timmy.

### **164. Laughs & Love**

Nya is a senior in high school in an environment where there are not many students who look like her as a Black Latinx woman, but she finds her balance in the imbalance. She has made a very difficult decision, believing that in order to fit in and in order to be accepted by her white counterparts she must, "put on a show." She laughs at jokes that are racially motivated when she knows that they're inappropriate. She laughs when her "friends" ask her questions about being Black or being Latinx. She never corrects them when they say things that are offensive to her personally and they will say these things with her in the room and with no shame, she laughs. It isn't until her senior year when she must do a family tree for a history assignment that she realizes what she's doing undermines her family, that she loves. It's the first time in her life that she's ever actually sat down and had a conversation with her mother who was from the South and her father who is from South America. It is through these conversations that she realizes just how deep the blood in her veins runs and the decision is made that when she presents this family tree to her classmates, she is also going to present to them a new form of education. One that

explains the things that are acceptable and the things that are not when they are speaking to her and about people like her. A very challenging story about how difficult it is for teenagers to belong in spaces that they don't feel like they can thrive in. Hopefully, this will educate students, teachers, and parents alike. Having a sense of belonging for a teenager may be more important than what those of us on the outside looking in can conceive. A story of truly finding and accepting your identity even if that means that you find yourself standing alone, isolated, on an island. Finally having that sense of self for Nya makes it all worth it.

### 165. *Distress*

In December of 2019 the entire world was turned on its axis with the introduction of COVID-19. What once was something of a myth turned into one of the biggest global pandemics that anyone in this generation has ever lived through. Joy, an emergency room doctor shares her experience during the pandemic as a mother and a wife. It is in her story that we realize that everyone during the pandemic struggled but that our medical care professionals saw it from a different reality, a stronger lens and experienced it in a more difficult way. A new concept of being a frontline worker, a warrior, and someone that no one on the outside wanted to be. What happens when her personal life, the things she holds closest to her make their way into the ER? Will she be able to continue to be Joy the doctor when the other parts of her are in complete chaos? It is through her eyes that we get a better understanding of how our medical professionals have the strength to walk in their respective places of work every day and put their lives in danger to save strangers.

### 166. *Life's Most Precious Jewel*

Gem is a young woman in her early 20s. In the opening of the scene, she is frantically preparing lunch for her niece Opal. In this moment we don't realize exactly who Opal is or what her story is, but we know that she is very important to her. Gem spent all of her childhood as a gymnast. She was a member of the most elite gymnastics training facility in the city, one of those places that mothers would kill to get their daughters into. She practiced day and night, and her goal was to get a scholarship to college in gymnastics. Unfortunately, all of that changed when her sister Jules who always supported her from the sidelines came to visit her at the gym. After staying on the mat longer than anticipated Gem goes to look for her sister and finds her in the team trainer's office. This is a story of accepting the things that you believe you see even if they make you do a double take. It is also a story of finding the courage to stand up with the people that you love no matter how difficult it is while not realizing that all of our decisions come with repercussions. A predator goes to trial for the things that he did to so many girls, as Jules testifies and carries a baby that she cannot find the words to speak about. Gem must support her sister in telling the most difficult story of her life and soon finds her new home in raising her niece Opal in such a way that her sister would be proud.

### 167. *60 Day Difference*

18-year-old Vanessa is going through one of the most difficult moments in her life trying to figure out how to maneuver grief. She shares stories of the relationship that she has with her family but especially the bond that she has with her abuela. It is because of her grandmother that she is able to have her dream 18th birthday party. It has everything that Vanessa has ever dreamed of, and it is topped off with a beautiful dress, a strawberry cupcake, in the presence of all of her friends and family. What could go wrong? But what we soon learn is that Vanessa falls prey to yet another random shooting and yet another random place where, yet another set of innocent people are killed. There is nothing fair about gun violence in America, nor does it feel like there's any way to keep yourself safe from it. Vanessa tries to put the pieces of her life together and move on as she attends the funerals of the people that she loves the most who died while celebrating her birthday. This is a story about how normal people are when they wake up in the morning on a day that will change their lives forever. They are unknowing participants in someone else's tragic form of pain. But through this story we realize that holding on to the love that we have always had for the people who mean the most to us is potentially the key to moving forward. Because that love will always live inside of us.

\*This story can be edited to be performed by anyone.

### 168. *Chapters of My Life*

Harper, a young woman in her early 20s stands before us very anxious. It is difficult for her to focus on times and her presence is also awkward. It takes a moment for her to share with us that she is in recovery. She was not an alcoholic nor was she addicted to any type of a drug but rather she is in recovery from being sexually assaulted by someone close to her that she trusted. Harper is a gymnast. She was living out her dream and working towards maintaining her college scholarship when something started happening to her that she couldn't put into words. But she also didn't feel like she had the power to say no so, she stayed silent. She put all of her energy into her work and didn't address the trauma that she was experiencing. There's something to be said about feeling like you are standing on an island all by yourself with no one to talk to and no one to help you. This is a difficult story of what has and could happen to someone who experiences repeated trauma in their lives and fights to regain their voice. When she decides to say "no" her power floods back into her like a forceful river, but the recovery affects her for a lifetime. It is also a story of strength because Harper eventually realizes that what was happening to her was wrong and that she could speak out, and when she did people listened. Sometimes being a voice for yourself and others and being heard by all is the greatest gift that we all have but may not know it until we use it.

### 169. *Out of Choices*

Raven is a 17-year-old girl that lives in rural America and has recently found out that she is pregnant on the heels of the overturning of Roe versus Wade. She shares

her story of experiencing extreme homelessness as well as being impoverished all of her life. Raven has a close relationship with her mother who is very honest with her about the life decisions that she has made and how those choices have affected her life and the lives of her children. The important thing that Raven expresses is the recognition that not long ago while she didn't have a lot of choices because of her financial situation she did have some, but now she has none. This is a story about innocence. This story reflects many women young and old who no longer feel like they have a choice. Seen through the eyes of a 17-year-old whose life has not quite begun but whose mother is willing to do and trying to do everything in her power so that her child does not continue the generational struggle that her family has been stuck in for decades.

### **170. Freedom Fighter**

This story is told from the perspective of Roy, a once slave who is now living in his freedom. He begins the scene by sharing the ingredients of this wonderful bowl of vegetable stew that he is making. He is happy and jovial dancing around his kitchen with an energy that lights up the room. But once he begins to share his story about how he got his freedom he takes us back to a time not so long ago for him when he was a slave. Not only was he a slave but he was a slave in Mississippi, at the height of the slave trade. And he was special to his master because he was a boxer. Whatever sport the master was interested in he utilized his slaves to make it come true. So, as Roy began to train to be a boxer the master realized how good he was and started to use him to fight other slaves from other plantations to make money. But eventually the only thing Roy wanted to do was to live his life, be a father to his children and a husband to his wife but master said no. He forced Roy to train his son to take over for him. Unfortunately, Roy knew that before there can be the next great fighter the present great fighter must die in the ring. This is a story about the unfortunate atrocities that happened to this particular man while he lived on a plantation and the only thing he sought out was freedom. Sometimes we forget to appreciate the simple things in life like being able to make a choice, being and breathe in life as we choose it or being able to share a bowl of vegetable stew and a piece of cornbread with friends and family. A story that reminds us that history happened, and it is our responsibility to honor it as Roy honored his family.

**\*Performer must be African American.**

### **171. Truth of the Portrait**

When Betty, an African American woman is first seen she seems frozen. Frozen in time but also encapsulated in a painting. One of the most difficult concepts in history is the idea that the people who get their pictures done are always the people in power. But behind every person of power are the people that they have used in order to get where they are. In the case of American history many of our forefathers owned slaves. This particular story takes place in an art gallery where pictures from many generations ago are on display. But a painter decided that instead of looking at the white man who ran this country we are going to look at the Black slaves that built it. Betty will come forward,



step out of the painting, and have a conversation where she tells us about what life was like before she was captured and brought to a country that was not her own, separated from her family, and enslaved. Betty sees this moment in her life as a celebration because she recognizes by being a part of this portrait, she is forever memorialized and remembered. This emotional feeling is more than she ever thought that she would get from being a slave. This story is a beautiful example of the importance of art and also recognizing that behind every portrait where there is a house there is someone that built it, where there is a man there is a partner standing behind them that helped to support them, and where there is a dive into American history there are slaves who have been forgotten, unappreciated for the forced labor that built this country. **\*This character must be African American.**

### **172. Baby Jamie**

This is a different sort of coming-of-age story. This is the story of James a female to male transgender teenager who has decided that now is the time to share with his family exactly who he is hoping that they will continue to love and support him. Unfortunately, when James gets the courage to share this information by sitting his family down in the living room as he holds a basketball in his hands for support, he slowly watches every person that he has ever loved exit out of the room including his mother. He then hopes that his friends at school will still be there to support him but the way in which they support him is that of being silent but present. Which for him he decides is better than absent and silent. He feels like he is isolated and alone with no true friends and no family to lean on when he realizes that someone who has always been around him is still in his corner, his friend Sean. It is in this moment that Sean accepts James for who he is and continues to be his friend and keep him safe at school and eventually the two begin to secretly date. And just when things begin to find some level of balance James's life is turned on its side yet again when he finds out that he is pregnant. This is a story of strength in the midst of loneliness, a kind of loneliness that most of us will never experience in our lives. But through all of that, this person is able to find their footing, keep their head up, keep their focus forward, and continue on with life as best they can. And even when life hits him again, he finds the strength to stand up and push on. In the end, things will be as they will be, because some things are in our control and other things are not. But in his loss, he finds the strength to open our eyes another day and realize that all we can do is what we can do. **\*This performance is written for a transgender performer.**

### **173. Reasons We Must Leave**

Stephanie is an amazing woman, she is also a mother, a wife, and a teacher. Her story is one that we saw a lot during the COVID pandemic that hit the world in 2020. As many different aspects of life began to rain down on the laps of education. There was a moment at the beginning of the pandemic when educators were hailed as frontline workers, very important people to the machine that runs America. But unfortunately, as the pandemic continued and the rhetoric about issues that were never a part of the educational system began to take over, and the lives of many teachers changed. And like them Stephanie

found herself being accused of teaching falsehoods to the students in her history class when in fact she was teaching what she had read, what she had learned, and what everyone knew to be fact. She now stands before the school board, the community, her administrators, other teachers and her students and their parents to give her letter of resignation. She can no longer be an educator. She can no longer stand in front of her students with the freedom to teach them the things that they need to know in order to leave her classroom saying that they have an understanding of what American History truly is. This resignation did not come lightly. It came on the heels of an attack on her and her family that was led by a group of people that decided that they would be judge and jury as to who she was as an educator. The number of teachers that are retiring early or leaving the field of education altogether since the beginning of the pandemic is staggering, numbers like we have never seen before. This is just one of the many stories of educators who had to make the most difficult decision, to leave the job that they love, the students that they live for, in the field that they are passionate about because they no longer felt safe in their own classroom and in their own skin.

#### **174. Pulse**

Shelby is a young woman who has come to terms with the fact that she is a proud and out lesbian. It is in the midst of a random encounter that she ends up finding the love of her life Jessi. Unfortunately, Jessi does not have the same relationship with her family as Shelby does. Jessi's family is deeply religious, and they decide that they will tell everyone that they are just best friends so that they won't have to deal with the push back. But through many events or homophobic comments Shelby can't pretend like it doesn't bother her and she gives Jessi an ultimatum either she tells her family about their relationship or they will have to break up. It is on this night that these two women go on the journey of their lives. After a tumultuous response from Jessi's family, they jump in their car and drive hundreds of miles to Florida to watch the sunrise on the beach and realize how special they are to one another. They follow that with a night of dancing and celebrating Shelby's birthday at a random club called Pulse. As they enjoy their first slow dance wrapped up in the freedom that they have just found the bullets begin to fly. Shelby does everything she can to keep Jessi safe but in the end a bullet finds its way in between them. This is a story of love, recovery and tolerance that reminds us that when you find that person that truly makes you feel like you have everything you need in the world wrapped up in them, that nothing and no one will be able to stop your love. A dedication to those who lost their lives, lost loved ones, or lived through the pulse nightclub tragedy in Florida. It is through love that we hope to move forward to a better day.

#### **175. And the Universe Spoke**

Nalia is a young Latinx woman who dotes on her new baby boy Marco. But we soon find out that her story of pregnancy is very different. She speaks about how large and close her family is living on the border in south Texas on the border. She has four older brothers who have made it very clear that they we'll keep her safe just as her parents have. She spent most of her life being a tomboy and playing with them, having the most

fun ever until she came into her own as a young woman. Her parents didn't have the money to send her to college but when she found out she had gotten a scholarship she decided she would work multiple jobs to save up money so that she could go away for school. It was at the end of one of her shifts from work that her life changed forever forcing her to keep the secret of her pregnancy from her parents and her brothers. If we are lucky the best relationships that we have begin within the four walls of the home that we are raised in. But with that also comes the fear of potentially disgracing them or disappointing them sometimes with life changing situations that were stolen from us. Nalia navigates such a theft. Something very important and very special was stolen from her that she can never get back but through this story we understand that with love and support there are many things that can be overcome. It is at a family intervention that she decides that being honest with her family and gaining their support is what she needs to be the best mother she can be and truly cope with the situation that changed her life forever. **\*Performer needs to be Latinx and does speak Spanish within the performance.**

### 176. Heartstrings

Viola creates an interesting dynamic when the story begins, she speaks of her father as being a world-renowned cellist. A man that people would flock to take pictures with, listen to him play, and take classes from. He all of his children to play and it was a house full of prodigies. The love that her father had for her mother was like poetry. She reminisces about when her mother was pregnant with all of their children her dad would take his cello to the hospital and he would play in her room and people would gather outside just so they could listen to him play and experience the joy and passion that he had with every stroke of his strings. What Viola realizes later in life after her mother dies and her father slips into a deep depression is that the person she admired the most was also the person who hurt her the most. When her mother unexpectedly dies, and Viola is left to care for her father she takes solace in making money the only way that she knows how by playing her violin in the subway. But when her father eventually tells her that no respectable violinist would ever play in the subway she is forced to see her father for exactly who he is. Many years later when she becomes a mother unfortunately the cycle of emotional abuse continues when she forces her daughter to play the violin. But it is when her daughter reminds her that she is not her father and tells her how she makes her feel that Viola realizes and comes to terms with her childhood. A beautiful story of the love that a father has for his wife and his children that manifests itself through the playing of music into a physical and emotional abusive situation. But as Viola learns with therapy and the passing of time it is possible to heal these wounds and become successful human beings.

### 177. Two Owls

To look at Paul, you might describe him as a typical man that grew up in rural America becoming one with the outside more than anything else. He begins his story by carving something out of wood and sharing how wood carving is what he does and why he loves it. He has a connection with nature and through that connection is where he bonded most

with his father. Paul found his joy and his livelihood taking full trees from his backyard and carving them into tables and chairs and selling them, even being asked to participate in a reality show that he happily declined. He wanted to do something that his father would be proud of. His father often talked about how important it was for a man to have rough hands, that you could learn a lot about a man based on how hard his hands were. As if a man's hands are reflection to how hard he works throughout his life. But Paul took all of these life moments to heart and sometimes his father would insult him because his hands were soft translating that into Paul being weak. It is when his father has a tragic accident that Paul wonders if he would ever live up to his father's expectations? This is a story about being able to connect with the person that we love the most even if we may not understand the reasons why they speak the words they speak. It showcases how grief can emotionally hold us back from living our lives and how sometimes we may never know the truth, but we still have to come to terms with that. A coming-of-age story of a country man who realizes that he must accept his past in order to move forward with the future that is in front of him that looks potentially very beautiful.

### 178. On Point

Julie is a Black ballerina that expresses herself best when she is standing in front of a mirror dancing. Her story starts like that of many young little Black girls dancing as a child. She talks about the first time she goes to the theater to see Misty Copeland dance on stage and how it affected not only how much she loved dancing but how she was able to see the potential of herself on stage. Through her story we learn that she had a close connection to her mother but that the relationship between her mother and father that started out so beautiful and amazing suddenly shifted. Her parents were good parents making sure to keep their personal lives to themselves by not allowing her to know that anything was wrong. But on a specific day everything that Julie knew was turned upside down when she finds herself in a situation with her father that she never expected. After which her mother decided that the best way for her to move forward was for her to do it alone leaving Julie home with her father. Everything that Julie knew was ripped from under her when her father decided as punishment that she didn't need to dance anymore. Julie then makes a fight or flight decision, at the age of 16 does she stay or does she go? By deciding to leave her father's house she realizes what it really means to live in your truth and follow your dreams. It is a story that tells us that sometimes when life falls apart it is the putting back together that truly creates the most beautiful moments of our lives. Moments that allow us to stand in front of any mirror and dance with our souls. **\*Performer needs to be Black and will dance ballet throughout the performance.**

### 179. Supermom

Alice is an algebra teacher, and she loves what she does. She loves her students, their parents, and she works hard at being the best she can be at her job. When she finds out that she is pregnant, and the father decides that he does not want to

participate the amount of stress that she undertakes is immeasurable. While wanting what's best for her daughter she also loses herself and doesn't realize it. After being put on bed rest her daughter Cassie is born and is the highlight of her life. But in the midst of not being able to connect with her daughter the way she wanted to she decides to go back to work early so that she can give her energy to her students. While she is at work, she has entrusted her next-door neighbors with watching her daughter. Because she is going through levels of PTSD Alice doesn't see the warning signs and repeats the idea that she was living her life with her eyes wide shut. It isn't until Cassie begins to digress in her growth that Alice begins to wonder why Cassie is all of the sudden afraid of the dark. Why is her three-year old so terrified to be left alone in her room? Why does she speak of the man in the closet and the man underneath her bed. Unfortunately, through this tragic experience what Alice comes to realize is that Cassie was not experiencing the exaggeration of a three-year old but rather a very real predator. A predator that was closer to home than Alice ever expected. This is a story that deals with the immense heaviness of guilt when a parent unintentionally opens the door and allows the devil to come in.

### **180. For Isabella**

Josefina is a Mexican woman in her late twenties who is stuck in the grief of losing her sister V. The scene opens with her preparing for the typical Sunday dinner, but this Sunday is different. Her niece Isabella is visiting, and she is making her favorite traditional Mexican dishes. One in particular connects Isabella to her late mother. Josefina tells the story of what it was like to grow up with a little sister that was only twelve months behind her. Their relationship almost felt like they were twins. But when V became a teenager, their lives went in different directions. She began to change, and unfortunately as some relationships would have it theirs began to fall apart. But it is when V returns home and shares with the family that she is pregnant that she begins to get her life back on track. Unfortunately, shortly after the birth of her daughter Isabella, V goes missing, never to be seen alive again. This is a story that deals heavily with the concept of femicide in Mexico. Josefina will not rest until she finds her sister, but is she truly ready for the consequences of what that reality will look like in the moment and moving forward? The loving story of the endless time that a sister is willing to commit in order to make sure that her sister in some way shape or form returns home. A heartbreaking situation that makes you wonder how important is the presence of women in the world today? Or are they being ignored when they disappear from existence?

**\*Character must be Latinx and does speak Spanish throughout.**

### **180. Picture of Hope**

Diego is a 15-year-old boy from Mexico. The scene opens with him in a very difficult situation. He is being held in a cage of sorts, but we find uncover that he is in a detention center. What would bring a 15-year-old to a border detention center? Diego shares the story of the loving relationship that he had with his father. That his father had been making the trip back and forth to America for years in order to

work. But one evening as he sat with his mother and his sisters on the porch waiting for his father to come home, they soon realize that for whatever reason he is not coming back. Diego makes a simple promise to his mother that he is going to go to America and is not going to come back until he knows exactly what happened to his father or he brings his father home with him. This is a beautiful story about the relationship between a son, his mother and his father. The determination that a young boy has to make sure that as his mother moves forward, and he stands next to her holding her hand, the memory of his father will never be lost. But as Diego searches the detention Center for his father, he encounters a ruthless guard who in the midst of Diego's trauma torments him in the worst way possible. Is his father alive, or dead? We find out that in situations of desperate times the most important thing to hold on to is... hope.

**\*This character needs to be Latinx and will speak Spanish throughout.**

### **181. *Darkness into Light***

Ruth begins the scene as an elderly woman standing in front of a casket. We don't know who this person is but it is clear she means the world to Ruth. She begins to tell us about Marion Pritchard, a Dutch woman that had taken her and her family in during the Holocaust. It is Marion who has died and Ruth felt compelled to not only attend her funeral but to share her experiences with Marion with the audience. She then transitions back to being a teenager and teacher her younger siblings how to play "hide and seek." A fun game but heartbreaking to see when we realize it is so hide from the military men who were searching for Jews to take to the camps. But Ruth continues to share her experience helping her parents and secretly meeting with her friends at night to help find places to hide if they needed to. It is after the vicious murder of her mother that the family decides they must move. They travel hidden by the forest by day and against the darkness at night until they come upon a nice-looking woman that Ruth says is trustworthy, introduce Marion. She happily takes them in, takes care of them and they assist as she helps Jewish people escape undetected. She is as caring and loving as Ruth's mother and she will forever be thankful for her giving them a place to hide and help all at the same time. When the war is over they part ways but years later as Ruth reads the local newspaper she sees that Marion has died and we have come full circle. The scene ends with Ruth giving a beautiful eulogy to remind us all that there are good people out there and Marion taught her that in the midst of the darkness you have to come through it to again find the light. **\*This story is fan far respectfully paying homage to the true hero Marion Pritchard.**

### **182. ... *From the Heart***

Bob Gregory begins his story with a beautiful dance, warm and welcoming. The kind of dance that makes it very clear that he dances with a sense of honesty and pride that cannot be faked, his passion lives in every move he makes. As Bob begins talking to the audience, we soon gather that his is to come level deaf. He then puts in his hearing aids and begins to speak and sign his story. Bob's story is one wrapped

up in the love his mother had for him, the hate his father had and how both of those things were wrapped up in his choice to be a dancer. This is a story that focuses on how so many young men don't feel supported by male figures in their lives because they simply choose to dance. For Bob, his mother encouraged him and he excelled. He goes on to tell the story of how he lost his hearing at the hands of his father and how that affected his dance, self-worth and feelings about his father. But this is a story of triumph that shows the audience that you can go through trauma and come out on the other side still living in your truth and still having the ability to love what brings you joy. Bob reminds us that if we have a passion, we should follow it because when you are broken and trying to gather all of the pieces to put yourself back together it may be that love that walks with you through it. A story of a young person losing the most important support system in their lives and watching them climb their way out of the darkness to stand on stage again and dance.

### 183. *In the Deep End*

The history and life of the Black male in America is one fraught with difficult and traumatic experiences in the past and present. In this story Caleed, a young man in his early 20s stands in an interview room talking about the people that he is surrounded by none of which look like him. He recognizes that everyone in the room is white except for him. He also recognizes how much the little things like the crisp white shirts stand out as well. He then takes us on a trip slightly back in time so that we can see how important and mentor his father was, but like many teenagers he didn't recognize it and he didn't appreciate it until many years later. It is the moment that his father shows him all of his battle scars from being nothing more than a Black man. Though his father grew up in a different time, in a different era, surrounded by different experiences unfortunately through time the situations for Black men have not drastically changed. One think Caleed's father drilled into him was that he needed to look the part as to not scare his White counterparts. His long hair wasn't professional, wouldn't be accepted and would always hold him back. Caleed fought the stereotypes, graduated from high school and college and as he prepares for this first big job interview after the passing of his father, he must reflect on how far he's come. A coming-of-age story that discusses how the hair of Black people has historically been seen as a piece to be connected to professionalism or the lack thereof. But like all things we too shall overcome this by showing up and showing out. **\*Performer needs to be African American, but gender could be changed.**

### 184. *We Didn't Survive*

\*Note this is a performance that is meant to be done by one actor. Within the performance the actor will play three different characters.

On May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Uvalde, Texas on the steps of Robb Elementary School the lives of so many people in that community and around this country were altered if not forever changed. One of the most tragic realities in America to date is that

unfortunately mass shootings have become a part of our norm. They happen more than ever expected and one would question, is it ever going to stop? The three voices that are memorialized in this solo performance address the perspectives of three people who others would say are survivors. In some way, shape, or form, they lived through that day on May 24th. However, as they tell their stories we realize and come to terms with the idea that more times than not people who have survived these tragic experiences where they have either been present, or lost a loved one, that though they are here they do not actually fully survive. Told from the perspective of a child remembering their little sister as well as two mothers the hope in sharing this story is that we realize no matter how far removed we are from these tragic situations there are people who live within them every single day. Survivors, because they are still here with us, but because they have lost so much it is a difficult perspective to live within. \*This performance may be altered to represent any gender identification of performer.