

Descriptions: Poetry

1. A Collection of Poetry Mother & Son Collection: *Boys Do That & I'm a Momma's Boy*

There is no greater connection than that of mother to child. But there is something special to be said about the connection between a mother and her son. In this collection of poems told from the point of view of the son we hear words that resonate love and acceptance. In *Boys Do That & I'm a Momma's Boy* we see a coming of age collection of a teenage boy that realizes he must stand on his own two feet but must admit that no matter the day, he will always love and respect his Momma.

2. A Collection of Poetry Sports Poems Collection: *She Watched Me Play, Sports Feet, The Loss of My Life*

Told from the perspective of a male he shares with us the importance of sports in his life. His stories are meant to make us laugh and cry as we realize that sports are a rite of passage for most young men and sometimes that rite of passage is a difficult one to leave behind. These poems will make you remember that one thing you held onto in high school that made you different and special and how amazing it felt to look up in the stands and see your parents and know that at that moment you were a star.

3. A Collection of Poetry Young Black Man Collection: *Research & Swag*

This collection deals specifically with the struggles of being a young black man. Beginning with *Research* we hear of a young man as he reflects on what research has shown of his history and what he has learned. Moving forward to present time with *Swag* and a lighthearted poem that connects us to what it means to have Swag, seek Swag and be Swag.

4. A Collection of Poetry About Love: *The Hardest Poem to Not Write, Black Coffee, The Other Lover*

This collection deals with the most difficult emotion known to man, love. This collection written from the perspective of a woman addresses a few different dimensions of love from writing about it to talking about it to realizing that you don't have it but want it. This collection is a rollercoaster of love and how good it feels to have it.

5. A Collection of Poetry About Religion: *My Life's Work, When I Knew I Was a Poet, Forgotten Prayer, Book of Life*

This collection shares different aspects of the struggle that overcomes us with religion. It is not a reflection of religious experience but rather a story of moments in time when religion comes to light and must be looked at and addressed. Some are prayers for strength and others are a proclamation of how they took their next step, through faith.

6. A Collection of Poetry About Self Image: *Mirrors, Best Kept Secret, I Wanted to Be White*

Many women have at one time or another had to look themselves in the mirror and put into words what they see. Some of these visions are strong and positive experiences of acceptance of what they see and who they are. Other times the reflection is not what they want to see and it may not even be an honest representation of who and what they stand for, but nonetheless they are all self-image realizations that should be addressed and shared with others so that they are not the only person seeing their strength. Exposing your what you see is a strength that women should own having. *Woman needs to be African American

7. A Collection About of Poetry History: *Just Asking Questions, Searching*

In this collection we experience the act of loss. The feeling that you have lost who you are in the midst of growing up in a world where history is often forgotten. From the perspective of an African American student Searching for answers to all of their ancestry questions that they feel were never answered. The act of seeking knowledge is proven to be a very beautiful thing in this collection.

8. A Collection of Poetry About Who I Am- *I Snap With Attitude, Yo Miss*

In this collection we explore what an African American woman sees when she looks at the world through different eyes. First through her own eyes seeing how people see her, second through the eyes of another minority man and his story and lastly through the eyes of the students that she teaches. Through this collection we see her love, hate, attitude and concern for the next generation. It is a celebration.

9. A Collection of Poetry About Bullying: *Strange Friends, Bully: That's Me, Mom Watching*

Bullying has become a term that we are all too familiar with. From elementary school through the workplace as adults bullying has taken America by storm, especially teenage girls. This collection has the presence of three different women telling three different sides of bullying: the bullied, the bully and the mother of a child who is the victim of bullying. Through their different and very distinctive voices we hear the pain of all of these women as well as seeing the struggle they are

going through just to live day to day. Bullying hurts, and it is important to see that it hurts everyone.

10. A Collection of About Poetry: *First Things Spoken, As I Sit, I Tried*

The most difficult thing to do as a poet sometimes is to...write a poem. In the following collection we explore the challenges of figuring out the words to use and at times the first words to say. How do you decide that a poem is worthy? Is the topic interesting? And sometimes we find that we have too many words for the message we are trying to say. In the end we find that poetry is, at times, figuring out how to say "yes" to all the right words at just the right time. You can't get poetry wrong if it's coming from the right place, the heart.

11. A Collection of Poetry About College: *Frat Party, First Report Card, Declaring A Major*

From the perspective of a young, inexperienced college student we see a young woman take her first step out of her parents house and into her dorm. From the all too familiar frat party to the shame and fear of waiting for your parents to get your first report card and see that you haven't done what you went to college to do to finally realizing that yes, you have to major in something. This collection of poetry is a fun and honest look at the challenges of college life. Comedy is always a good way to reflect on times when mom and dad warned you but you just didn't listen. College, a learning experience for everyone. (Comedic)

12. A Collection of Poetry About the Loss of a Child: *His Name Was Jason, It's Been Seven Thousand Thirty- Two Days*

The most difficult time in the life of a parent is the presence and then loss of a child. In this collection of poetry, we see the reflections of three different women who are experiencing the loss of their children in three different ways. A mother loses her last-born Jason. The challenge of having children, raising them and then losing a child. A mother who knows what it feels like to have life growing inside of her knows that something is wrong, but it is not until she loses Jason that she must pull herself together to continue being a mother for the rest of her children. Finally, the account of a woman whose daughter was abducted nearly twenty years earlier, but in her day to day life she still cannot move on with her life. She is still counting the days that her daughter has been gone. (Dramatic)

13. A Collection of Poetry About Dating: *Pretty, The Blind Date, Perfect Match*

From the perspective of a man who is full of energy and not good at putting that energy into dating. He goes from knowing what he wants, to thinking he knows what he wants, to depending on other to tell him what he wants. His mother calls

him “Pretty” and that’s the only thing that he needs to feel successful. He recounts a series of unsuccessful blind dates by close family members. Lastly, finding the perfect match is simple, find a woman just like your mother. (Comedy)

14. A Collection of Poetry About War: *In The Jungle, Wounded Warrior*

A coming of age collection about the trials and life altering changes that can come from the evil that crosses all boundaries and borders; war. From the eyes of a soldier that clearly remembers the time that he spent in the jungles of Vietnam to the warrior that returns home missing his legs. They both have a story to tell. One of strength and fear and love for the cause that they were fighting for. The stories of two men who are generations apart but still have aspects of their war experience that mirror each other. Both men fighting for this country and both men returning home blessed to be alive but saddened to be so different than the men they were when they left. (Dramatic)

15. A Collection of Poetry About Love: *Love By Numbers, Lessons From Dad, Perfect Painting*

There is no greater love than, LOVE. In this collection we explore love from different areas within a man’s life. The love that a man has for his son who is on his way to his first date. The jokes that they make to each other that are private to them and the love that they share between them on this special night. The love that he has for the woman he can remember knowing all of his life from first grade to the final moments, their love is real and finally to the love that he sees when he lays next to the woman of his dreams. She is his perfect in every way. A cohesive collection about the joy and pains of love. (Serio- comedy)

16. A Collection of Poetry About Being a Young Black Man: *Square 1, Recreation, Chronicles of A Drive-by*

There are many things that can be said about being a young black man. Within the text of these poems lays a center of focus that gives us a light into a place that has been very dark but always with a ray of hope in the midst. A collection about starting from the beginning, the Square 1 of the situation, then analyzing the reality of what is it that we see on television that sets our fear? Fear of what? Finally, a poem that speaks on the happenings on a day when there is a drive by. This collection is a day in the life of an African American boy in Any town, USA (Dramatic)

17. A Collection of Poetry About Motherhood: *I Parent Alone, Solid As A Rock, By The Grace*

There is no gift that a woman can pray for that is better than that of being a mother. The feeling of the baby growing inside of her and the creation of life is a connection that cannot be broken. The story of a mother who is reflecting on the struggles of being a single parent. The love that a mother has for the struggle that is raising a family. And finally the story of a mother who will not end a pregnancy that will change her life forever. All of these stories need to be told and heard. The love a woman has for creating

life. (Dramatic)

18. A Collection of Poetry About Being a Teacher: *First Day, I Know You Are Not Cheating, Safe Place*

The greatest job in the world is that of a teacher. In this collection of poetry we get to experience the trials of the day to day of a teacher. From the challenges of working to get the students to focus and believe in themselves to the fun of catching a student cheat but still teaching him the lesson that he is better than cheating. Sometimes all a student has to hear is that they are worth it. Worth more than what they ever thought of themselves and better than what they believed possible. Being the daily reminder that without the teacher standing in front of the classroom, where would we be? (Serio- Comedy)

19. A Collection of Poetry About My Little Black Dress Does Not Mean Yes: *My Little Black Dress, Mother Knows Best*

My little black dress does not mean yes is a movement that began when addressing the idea that a woman can indirectly say “yes” to sexual advances not from her own verbal affirmation but by the things that she is wearing. In this collection we see the story of two different women. One adult woman who is preparing for a date and is admiring how she looks. She goes on the date and has a wonderful time and thinks that this man may be her future husband until he walks her to her car and takes advantage of her based on what he thought she was saying but what she had chosen to wear. The second poem is from the perspective of a college student. Beginning with being dropped off by her very worried mother and ending with her first frat party. She soon realizes that she doesn’t know it all. These poems do not bash anyone; they simply address an ongoing problem from the perspective of a more mature woman and a teenager to help us realize that this is a problem at any age.

20. A Collection of Poetry About LGBT Movement (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender): *Over The Stone Wall, Coming Out, Movement, Out Of Time*

From the perspective of a male this collection deals with the LGBT movement. From the Stonewall movement in 1969 to the present poetry is the outlet for these very different men to tell their stories. The collection includes a man who came out to his parents in the south on the day that the Stonewall Movement began. A man who talks about how unfair it is that straight people don’t have to “come out” but gay/lesbian people do. The final poem touches the hearts of many as a man who is celebrating his one hundredth birthday remembers the day he tried to tell his family that he was gay and they rejection he received. In the end he decides that the best way to live is to never express himself again. Comparing his life to that of the humming birds that sing to him outside of his window. As he accepts the choices of his life he hums, and dances into loving himself and hoping for the love of another before he dies.

21. *A Collection of Poetry About Saying Goodbye to Your Mother: The Last Ten Seconds, Eulogy*

This collection deals with one of the most emotional times in a person's life, the death of their mother. In *The Last Ten Seconds* we follow a young woman as she goes through all of the things that she does remember about her mother and their relationship but how no matter how hard she tries she can't remember the last ten seconds of her mother's life. By the end of the poem she has shared her inner most memories of their bond, a truly emotional story of love and the journey to take the first step to move forward. The second poem in this collection *Eulogy* is about the struggle that a woman encounters when she is faced with writing her mother's eulogy. With so much to say and not enough time to say it in, where does she start? What story does she tell? How does she say goodbye and wrap things up in just two minutes at a funeral? She finds direction in the guidance of her father that gives her very simple advice, "Look to heaven and she will be smiling down at you." Sometimes it is the simple advice from just the right person that makes all the difference.

22. *A Collection of Poetry About Loneliness: Alone, Baby, Security Blanket*

The worst feeling in the human experience is loneliness. As a woman explores different aspects of loneliness in her life we see the facets of life from a level of being alone. The emotion experienced allows the woman to share her story in many different ways. She speaks of the loneliness that she feels after a break up with the man that was to be her husband but it is focused to the connection she makes with her emotions and the feeling of rain. Followed by her telling the joys of being pregnant and feeling a being growing within her and then the devastation when she loses that baby and is expected to move on. Finally a simple blanket can mean so much. She wraps herself in this blanket to hold on to the generations of people that she has loved that are now gone but they still live within the stitches of this blanket that she can't help but wrap herself in it, for the feeling of love.

23. *A Collection of Poetry About Letting Go of Love: Heartbreak, Goodbye, I Do Not Hate The Man*

Letting go of love can be just as difficult as finding someone to love. In this collection a woman revisits the reason behind the loves that she has had and why she had to let those loves go. She speaks to the reasons behind the Heartbreak that she feels when she realizes and must accept that the man that she loves does not love her. She shares that pain and joy of being able to finally say Goodbye to the man and all of the drama that came with him and his love. And finally she cleanses her soul by moving forward and sharing that she does not hate the man for all that he did to her. It is the ability to move forward and heal that is the most difficult thing to do but this woman's strength, creativity and power allow her to love herself a little bit more than she loved him.

24. *A Collection of Poetry About Hispanic Music: Diary Age Fifteen, Spirit Of My Beat, How Do I Say Thank You? (Selena)*

The music of any culture is precious and something that we hold close to our hearts. For the Hispanic culture of young girls there was no woman that affected them more than the life and untimely death of Selena. She was a pillar of the community and her music showed little Hispanic girls that anything is possible. They can be beautiful and talented and thrive as a musician in multiple countries. For this young girl all she wants is to do is to sing. She wants to experience the beats of the best music that she grew up on, that was taken away from her. She questions if she can still make a difference in her life without her mentor to help support her. Her poems are rich in culture and connection with her family and Selena's encouragement. A life taken too soon from the world but especially affected was a generation of little girls that cried every time Selena sang a song and were devastated in her death.

25. *A Collection of Poetry About Loss: Bobby, All I Needed, Where is Me?*

In this collection we deal with three different visions of loss. The first is that of a teenager who watches as his friendship with his friend since the age of five changes drastically. Once best friends Bobby grows into a teenager that is mean spirited and hateful to people while his best friend stands by and watches. Finally, Kevin decides that it is time to say goodbye to him and ends their friendship after asking him to play one last game of kickball. All I Needed chronicles a son's relationship with his mother and what makes it so special. The only thing missing is his father. Then he realizes that his mother gave him everything that he ever needed in his life. Where is Me, is about losing oneself in the midst of the tragedies of life. As a collection it brings forth a lot of emotional connection things that we, as people, have with the people closest to us.

26. *A Collection of Poetry About Being an Abused Woman: Black and Blue, Reasons Why*

Domestic violence is ever-present in today's society and the questions are always the same, we want to know why? Why do women choose to stay and in these volatile situations? The hope is that within this collection of poetry we start to understand the unheard voice of abused women. A voice that has been silenced and not listened to, but now is the time to realize that these women have always been talking to us in their own silent fear. These poems are a voice to the battered woman and a glimpse into trying to poetically address and the reasons why. *Black and Blue* addresses how this woman sees the bruises on her body translated into poetry. *Reasons Why* shares one woman's abuse story from beginning to the end.

27. *Reflection*

An African American man reflects on his life while staring into an unforgiving mirror. He sees all of his flaws and points them out. He decides to that making fun of himself being overweight will make others not pick on him. From a very young age he tries to understand why he is fat and why he isn't being accepted by his peers or by himself. He

enters middle school and tries to get his footing on where he fits in. Is it in band where everyone is a little strange or in football where a fat kid is a weapon? He wades through the mud and finds himself in a speech and debate class where he actually has a voice that can say something meaningful. As he gets his footing with who he is his body turns against him and the diabetes takes over. An unwanted guest that will never leave his body, but how does he accept and how does he move forward? By looking in the mirror and seeing the wonderful person he is looking at. By accepting his own reality and knowing that he can help himself but the first step is acceptance.

28. *Walks In The Park*

There is no greater gift than children. As an African American man takes his three children for their traditional walk in the park we hear him talk freely about the love he has for his children and how each of them came to be. He has great joy in the stories of what makes each one of them special and we begin to learn why these walks in the park are so special. He soon expresses his concern for the world that they will be released into at some point. A world that sees the African American child in a certain light that may or may not be correct but as he remembers being pulled over, searched and released he wonders if things will ever be “normal” for his children. Will they forever live in fear of the unknown of just being black? For now he will hold their child hands tight and enjoy the walks, while always worrying about what is to come when he must allow them to grow, be individuals and let their hands go free.

29. *A Collection of Poetry About Women’s Suffrage & Feminism: Lessons From A Child, ...And Then It Happened, Then She Spoke*

In this collection the history of women and their voice is examined. Beginning with a young woman who asks her niece what she things her role is as a woman and realizing that the way she sees herself is so small compared to all of the things that she could be dreaming of. When she finally opens up her eyes to the endless possibilities, she is amazed and once again dreaming like a child should. Then she speaks of watching intensely on television on the day that the first woman was allowed to vote and finally an American history lesson on how many women had to speak in order for women to finally gain the right to vote in 1920. It is a wonderful and emotional ride from the perspective of a woman who knows that woman are strong, always have been and we will continue to grow and come together and fight.

30. *A Collection of Poetry About Medgar Evers: They Say I Killed Him, They Say I Died A Hero*

On June 12, 1963 Medgar Evers, Civil Rights activist, was shot in the back in the drive way of his home. Like many African American men during this period in American history his murder went unsolved for thirty-one years. It was in 1994 that Byron De La Beckwith was brought to trial for a third time. The first two trials in 1964 both ending in hung juries, both represented by full white male jurors. It is through the voices of both of these men that their stories and poetic reality comes to life. One still living in his true belief that the death of Medgar Evers was something that needed to happen and the other,

the man on the receiving end of his hate fought all his life against the violence that eventually killed him. Two historical men whose paths will forever be crossed, intermingled and tied up within each other. Years of hatred building up to one night, one gun, a handful of bullets and finally, the hand of justice. Their voices tell us that ignorance can sometimes speak sense and freedom is still worth fighting for.

31. A Collection of Poetry About Growing Up and Letting Go: *The Moment, Once*

Sometimes in our lives we realize that our parents have held on to us so tight that we become sheltered. But it is not until we make it to a certain age that we can actually start to see the world around us for what it actually is and not for what we were told it was. It is all out of love. All coming from a good place of protection but when we start to see things differently life can get scary really fast. In “The Moment” we explore the moments in life that we are a part of that we don’t realize we have no control over, until eventually we are able to reflect on what has always been and start to hold our lives in our own hands. Then in “Once” we revisit the time when as children, we are carefree and believe that anything is possible. We believe that dreams can come true but eventually we question why when we grow and start to think that our parents start to fear for us. Why it is that when free will becomes a part of our lives that they fear for our safety. They should trust that they did their jobs raising us and we will in turn make good decisions. But we have to learn the world that they have sheltered us from. We have to see it for what it is to us and not what it is to them. We have to be able to remember what we once believed and transform that into what it is to be an adult and make decisions free from outside influences. We still want to dream, we still want to fly.

32. A Collection of Poetry About the Truth Behind Suburban America: *False Truths, Dominoes*

In this collection we see the world through the eyes of a normal teenager that believes his/her life is anything but normal. When they reflect on their life as a white teenager living in the suburbs they begin to see things in their world that they didn’t know to be true. In False Truths we see this teen walk outside of their home and see their world for exactly what it is, a place where people secretly take out their personal trash because we have to hold up a certain level of false realities in order to be a part of this group. They share that it is all a lie that they are keeping up appearances on when the reality is that they are just as much of a mess as any other family or teenager anywhere else. Reflecting on doing drugs and getting away with it, hiding the trips to rehab because mom and dad can afford to do so. This is the life of the suburban teen, and it’s their lie. In Dominoes a teen reflects on the day that their best friend dies of an overdose at a party and no one talks about it. No one gets in trouble for it and no one is honest about what the problem is. Reflecting on the life and death of their friend. Talking about the days after when he is buried and the following day there is another party where another group of friends will be there celebrating the life of their dead friend. This is their reality; this is the American suburban lie.

33. *A Collection of Poetry About Being Gay and Personal Acceptance: Love Is Just Love, SLAM!*

This collection tells two very different stories that all come to the same conclusion; there is nothing wrong with being who you are and there is definitely nothing wrong with being gay. In “Love Is Just Love” a soft-spoken man talks about his first love, a boy he sat next to in elementary school. He soon realizes that he was too young to know what these feelings were but that is the problem with growing up. Something as simple as first loves can be forgotten because life tells us that what we feel can’t be right in certain situations. It’s a simple story of fun, friendship and the recognition of love on the playground. In “SLAM!” we experience a free-flowing character who proclaims that he wants to be a rapper but it’s all a front. He’s from the suburbs, he wants to be a rapper but that requires him to be honest about who he is and his life. It is a smart homage to the ability to tell a great story through rap and a coming out story that gives hope to finding freedom in our own skin.

34. *A Collection of Poetry About the Memories of Daddy: At His Hands, Only A Father’s Love, First*

This collection is a daughter’s dream of poetry. It is dedicated to the real times; good and bad of being a daughter and specifically focusing on the relationship between father and daughter. First addressing the idea that event he man that a girl sees as perfect can become flawed when he experiences the death of his wife but in the end forgiveness is what has to be done so that everyone can have peace. Next we look at our hands and compare them to that of what we see in our father’s hands: the size, the love, the strength, all the things that hands do and so much more. Finally we reflect on our “firsts” and how all of them were joyous and shared with our father. Through laughs and tears we remember and think about the joys of having a close relationship with our father’s. It is a collection that will make you call your dad and say “Thank you” after you read it, or it will make you thank your mom if your dad wasn’t there, either way you will most definitely be thankful.

35. *A Collection of Poetry About the Life and Death of Popularity: Popular, Mean Kid, Walls Falling*

This collection is an emotional rollercoaster. It is not sex specific so a girl or a boy may perform it, but it deals with the challenges of life as a teenager, wanting to be popular, being bullied, being a bully and how that person sees life and sees themselves and finally, the inner fight that a teenager goes through when they are fighting the urge to hurt themselves going from kindergarten through the last moments of their life with a razor in hand. The reflection within this collection of poems challenges us to look at ourselves as well as the world around us and actually see what is right in front of us. Be the person that sees the person that is struggling, makes a point to connect with them do not just turn the page because these people exist in our everyday life and they need someone on their side.

36. *A Collection of Poetry About the Voice of the African American Woman: Pages in My Memoir, Dear White People: Chronicles of My Black Voice-*

Told through the stories of an African American woman this collection deals with two aspects of race. The first is a simple loving reflection of her memoir. Often, we never think of what our life book will look like but in this collection she shares with us the pages and history of the life that she lived, and all of its shadows and demons. The second poem in this collection is an ode that chronicles her black voice. It is an expression of the humor and honesty of the things that African American people feel and an explanation of our lives so that if nothing else the audience does not get angry, but that the audience gains understanding of a race that they have never been a part of. Together these poems tell beautiful stories that need to be told and heard.

37. *A Collection of Poetry About Mental Illness: What I See, Trying to Understand, I Am My Father's Child*

The challenge to understand mental illness is one that has been a focus of many studies in this country and beyond. In this collection we address the sensitive subject of mental illness. This collection may be performed by a man or a woman as mental illness has no sex, no race and it does not discriminate. In *"What I See"* we see a person looking into a mirror and they share with us the distorted vision of what they see in themselves. In *"Trying To Understand"* a person suffering from mental illness shares the thoughts they have as they look at the world and try to understand why their life is the way it is. Finally, in *"I Am My Father's Child"* a person suffering from a mental illness reflects on the reality that this is a disease that runs in their family, maybe death would have been a better option.

38. *A Collection of Poetry About the Latina Voice: Hear My Voice, Hear My Cry What Do You Want To Know*

Everyone has a story to tell and the strongest stories tend to be from the people who have been or are being told not to speak. In this collection we hear the voice of the Latina woman who is excited to share the person that she is. Both poems dealing with the experience of being silenced for too long and now needing to not only speak but to be heard. The collection addresses "The Wall" that has become an active topic of conversation but looks at it in the way that digests the purpose of any wall not just this specific wall. This woman wants to be heard. She shares with the audience the family and life experiences that she has had that makes her look at the color of her skin and realize she is no different than anyone else, but can she make others see this as well? Finally she asks the question that opens up all communication, rather than "thinking" you know me, she poses the question, "What do you want to know?" The collection is heartwarming, sassy, emotional and relevant to the world we are presently living in.

39. *A Collection of Poetry About Gay Acceptance: Normal, The Day*

The concept of acceptance is a difficult one for many people. Feeling as though we all

have the right to our opinion not realizing that voicing that opinion may have a negative affect on someone else. That person may be an adult, they may be a child, but our words mean something, our eyes speak mountains. This collection may be performed by a male or a female student. In “Normal” we see the joy of life through the eyes of an observant child. They ask us to be the fly on the wall that sees their family as just the “normal” family that they see them as. It doesn’t matter to this child that both of his parents are dads, they love each other like any family would, just normal. In “The Day” we are walked through the wedding day of a same sex couple and the things that were experienced and the most difficult reality that their brother isn’t attending. We see a day in their life, the things that have happened to them that makes them look at life a little different. And on this day all they want is what we all way, love.

40. A Collection of Poetry About the Importance of Family Time: Tradition, Family Time, Priority

The importance of family sometimes gets lost in translation. It becomes something that is taken for granted because it is always there and not something that we have to work for. Family is a constant, is never lets you down and it never forgets how important you are to it. But we sometimes forget how important it is to us, sometimes we forget that it is even a part of our lives at all. In this collection we address the idea of what our family *Tradition* were and how we have gotten away from them. As technology overtakes our lives we find ourselves removed from the basic gifts of life, family. The idea of *Family Time* and taking out the time to focus on spending time with the people you share your space with. Finally, the idea of *Priority*, recognizing what your priorities are and also seeing that if they are not what they should be they need to change. Being able to evaluate your priorities and make a decision to see things differently. Family will always be the backbone of who we are no matter how we may feel about them day to day. We can not choose our families.

41. A Collection of Poetry About Teen Pregnancy Evolving: Baby 1965, Baby 2015

As time changes and generations change, we are often confronted with same situations but different realities of how they are being dealt with. In this collection of poetry, we will specifically deal with the topic of teen pregnancy. We will look at it from the perspective of two different teenage girls living in two very different times. In “*Baby 1965*” we see a young girl who has no concept of what sex is and how these things work. Her mother talks to her very vaguely about adult things but she was told there are things that are saved for your husband. She didn’t understand what this meant and so when she becomes pregnant, she was confused. She was sad and scared. Her parents took her to a home for pregnant teens, dropped her off and vowed to pick her up after she had given birth. While in “*Baby 2015*” we see another teenage girl in the same scenario, but the outcome is very different. I true testament to the change in time. The pregnancy occurs in a different way. The young girl has a different amount of knowledge that the 1965 girl didn’t have and the parent’s reaction is the same but the effects are different. This collection shows the same scenario in two different times. Not to say this is how all of

these cases happened but to say that there were different options and different approaches. The innocence of girls in these periods is also shared as well.

42. A Collection of Poetry About the Underground World of Human Trafficking: Things I Sell, Trying to Get Out, Traffic

The history of human trafficking has been a part of our history for hundreds of years. It was happening before slavery and has since become a huge part of our crimes committed against people in this country. In this collection we will dive into the experience of two very different women: one woman is living and remembering how it was that she came to be held captive and sold, the other woman is one of the captors. They are both telling very different stories but what we see in both of them is their ability to hold on to the things and the people that they used to be before this world overtook them. Both, to a certain extent are looking for a way out and neither one of them can find it. The final poem "Traffic" is a fast-paced poem that drives us through the life of trafficking. Through these three stories we gain knowledge of both sides and as much as we feel heartbroken for one and hate for the other the most important thing is to make sure we continue to feel.

43. A Collection of Poetry About the Immigration Uproar 2016: Priceless, Yeah, I Speak Spanish

In 2016 America experienced one of the most historical Presidential elections of all time. With this election came a lot of changes to the America that we had known and grown up in more so than any other American President. A movement began. One that started and grew and pushed its way across America and truly took flight. Men, women, and children of all races, demographics, religions and backgrounds came together to protest, march and speak out about a number of political issues that began to overtake the media and therefore saturate our world. One of these issues was immigration. In this collection a Latina (o) person speaks to two experiences: first the day that they got up and decided to march for the first time and what that moment means for them as well as sharing that moment with their mother, and second being able to shout loud and proud that, "Yeah, I speak Spanish" more of a slam poem that takes us on a very real, very emotional and to the point ride of this is how I see the world right now and you may not agree with what my eyes see but you will hear me. A great collection that has the strength to make us all stop and think.

44. A Collection of poetry about a Russian Refugee: Looking Behind, Home Is Not Here, Smile Back

In this collection we see the story of a woman and her journey from Russia to the United States. In these three poems that tell three very different moments in her new life. First in *Looking Behind* we walk side by side with a woman as she crosses the freezing terrain of Russia to meet the boat that brings her to America. A trip that begins with many other people but slowly she comes to realize that she makes it there days later alone and wonders if this is worth it. Realizing that she can't turn back she makes the trip. In *Home*

Is Not Here we watch her as she works long days and nights to pay back the people that brought her to America and she continues to question is it worth it. The America she had heard of is not the place that she is living it. When she finally gets her true freedom she enjoys a run down the street, wind in her hair, rolling in the grass and a new friend that simply offers her an apple, maybe she will make it. Finally in *Smile Back* for a short time she experiences home. Living in New York she finds the neighborhood where all Russian's who make it to America want to live. Same language, culture, values, church, stories and understanding but when she gets married and moves away she again finds herself searching for Home.

45. *A Collection of Poetry About Seeking Answers Towards Equality: Not My Momma's Prayer, I Will Kneel/ I Will Raise My Fist*

In 2016 a football player took a knee during the National Anthem which sparked a national discussion asking the question is it disrespectful or is it freedom of speech to have a silent protest. In *"Not My Momma's Prayer"* which addresses the difference between the prayer that a mother gives and the prayers that we now need to give. From the ruling that ended prayer in school to all of the disasters that we have seen in recent history, maybe what we need is a little prayer. Followed by *"I Will Kneel/ I Will Raise My Fist"* which is a detailed look at the idea that questions if we are taught to kneel to pray, which is showing the utmost respect, is it possible that kneeling for the National Anthem is a protest- but not disrespectful as kneeling, praying and bowing your head are all signs of respect on biblical levels across different religions. The goal of this collection is NOT to start an argument about religion, but rather to hopefully make people think that it is at least possible that a silent protest about one specific topic is not intended to be disrespectful to another. ***This collection is not race specific or male/female specific. It can be performed by one actor/ actress. It is a slam poetry collection.

46. *A Collection of Poetry About Online Dating: Swipe Right, Not Ready..., Silver Makes Gold*

This collection looks at online dating in 2017 from three different perspectives. First, a comedic look as we see a young woman talk about how easy dating is, jump on her apps and start swiping. She even jokes with her mom about how she can't believe all of the effort people use to go through to date "back in the day." Next we see a woman, older than the first woman who talks about her reservations to online dating. She didn't feel like she was ready but after some encouragement from her girlfriends she decides that maybe it is time. After meeting a "nice guy" she finds herself on the receiving end of a sexual assault that takes her to a dark place, but reminds her to trust herself before anyone else. Lastly, we see the high-spirited grandmother who is introduced to the world of online dating by her granddaughter. She swipes right, connects with an elderly man who, like her, just wants someone to talk to. They have both lived long lives, lost their significant others, but have decided that a friend to talk to might be

exactly what they need. It makes you smile and feel the love that is possible at any age.

47. *A Collection of Poetry About the Present State of Humanity: Do Better, Essentially, Damn Right I Fight*

***Originally told from the perspective of a white actor or actress but could be cut to reflect anyone. This collection deals with the present state of humanity, race relations and how we should see ourselves living in America in 2017. In “Do Better” we address injustices as well as the unequal treatment of people of color while discussing the idea of white privilege. The concept behind the poem is for people to realize that no one should feel like they are standing alone and that there are advocates of all races that are not afraid to let their voice be heard. In “Essentially” we speak on the things that we need to address, change and make better so that our history books will not solely reflect a time of so much hate and disorder. What will our children read about us? What world will be left for them? Taking the presentation of a headline in a newspaper, we read the headlines, analyze them, address them and decide will we sit and wait for tomorrow’s paper to drop at our feet or will we get up and work for change? Lastly in “Damn Right I Fight” we see the narration of the storytelling explaining why it is that they fight. They tell the story of their mother being assaulted and as a result they were conceived. The fight that their mother went through is what makes them want to fight for everyone who they feel is being silenced in the world. *These two poems move with a certain attitude and style that creates a place for the audience to be challenged, reflect and see themselves in a true reflection.

48. *A Collection of Poetry About Being a Lesbian: When I First Knew, She’s Kinda Cute, I Wonder*

This collection deals with a woman sharing different moments and aspects of her life as a lesbian woman. In “When I First Knew” she shares her first memory of knowing she was attracted to women and moving through her life and hitting different milestones of her life. In “She’s Kinda Cute” she shares seeing a woman in the grocery store and how difficult it is for her to approach her and say something. This poem goes back and forth between the woman she sees and the night she came out to her family. It is an interesting representation of where she was and where she is. Lastly in “I Wonder” she shares a small piece of her inner soul in the things that she dreams about, the questions that she “wonders.” It is a powerful piece that presents the world as we are living it from the perspective of someone who sees it from a different set of eyes. This collection is a representation of strength and an account of life and emotions for a young lesbian woman.

49. *A Collection of Poetry About What Latina Means: Stereotypes, Sunday Dinner, Brown Is Better*

This collection addresses how a Latina sees herself from the view of the world and also an internal view of how she sees herself. In “Stereotypes” she reflects on what she sees in

the media about the Latino community and how they are seen through that lens. What she expresses is the idea that if the only things we “know” are what we see on television and read in social media that we are living in the world of blind faith; that we should try to learn from our own experiences rather than believing someone else’s. In “Sunday Dinner” we see her family from her eyes waking up to the Sunday ritual of family cooking and eating together. It is a generational experience that is emotional and beautiful in her storytelling. Lastly in “Brown Is Better” she stands before us and bares it all, she is amazing in any and all ways. She sees herself and her brown as the most amazing color ever. This collection creates a balance of the good, bad and beautiful of what it means to be a Latina.

50. A Collection of Poetry About an Immigration Story: *Heavy Heart, Tell Them*

This collection addresses a heartfelt immigration story. In “Heavy Heart” we hear the story of a father standing in front of some type of a government organization fighting to not be deported. His son Luis is in a hospital and is unconscious and might not make it. When the hospital finds out they report the family to the proper agency and now when they should be with their son in the hospital they stand in front of this group fighting to stay in the United States so that their son doesn’t die alone. Pairing with the previous poem “Tell Them” is from the perspective of the son Luis who wants to be an American citizen by his birthday but when the presidential election happens, his life changes as laws begin to change. The audience doesn’t immediately know the connection of the two poems but it becomes clear who Luis is as he speaks. The love and energy that comes from this little boy is humbling. He just doesn’t want to die alone. He wants to do all the right things. This collection is a look at immigration from a different place, from the eyes of loving parents and the heart of a sick child. And as it says within the collection, “Sometimes we do the wrong things for all the right reasons.” The things that a parent will do for a child are limitless, just as the silent strength of a child to live. An Immigration Story could be inner woven rather than told as two separate stories.

51. A Collection of Poetry About Generational Differences: *Grandpa, Grandson*

This collection of poetry deals with the separation of generations and the challenges they present. In this coming of age sort of story we see the same story told from two different perspectives. First we have the perspective of the grandfather that is raising his grandson after his son dies. He loves his grandson but as he gets older he sees the separation that they have. The lack of communicating face to face, he doesn't leave his room because everything he lives for is in his room. His grandson loves his grandfather and we know that but he wishes that he could connect with him like he wants to. The Grandson poem tells the story of a loving kid who appreciates his grandfather and loves him dearly. He sees the separation but it’s just life to him. These poems run side-by-side sharing both of their realities and is very emotionally charged with love and appreciation on both sides. Beautiful moments of the grandson showing him how to use a cell phone, grandpa cooking dinner for his grandson’s girlfriend and how to take pictures. In the end of the poems the grandson is leaving for college, he sits on the front porch and shows grandpa how to work his new cell phone so that he can call him, take and receive pictures and

always have a piece of him with him. These poems can be done separately one after the other or can be woven so that each perception of their reality can be seen at the same time.

52. A Collection of Poetry About Being Kidnap Victim: Trusted Ride, Darkness Conversation, Recovery

This collection addresses three different people and their experiences after and during a kidnap situation. In “Trusted Ride” the victim shares with us what happened to them leading up to the moment that they got into the car with someone that they thought they could trust. It ended up that this wasn’t someone that they should have come into personal contact with. Once in the car they realize that the situation is vital and the person is not going to let them go. The memories of what life was, will it be again or will they never see their loved ones again? In “Darkness Conversation” we see a person waking up in the trunk of a car and the moments are they awaken trying to put the situation into words. Trying to figure out where they are, what is happening, what do they see, hear, smell, things that can help them to stay alive. The liquid in their eyes is blood, maybe? What do they want? Who are they? Where are they taking me? A conversation in complete darkness, with no one to talk to and no one but themselves to listen to what could be their last conversation. “Recovery” is the final chapter. A person in recovery from being kidnapped. They share the steps that they have to take on a daily basis to be able to put one foot in front of the other and continue on with life. It is a difficult daily struggle but with support recovery and restart of life is possible. ***Performer can be either male or female.***

53. A Collection of Poems About Overcoming Eating Disorders: First Time, Near Death

In this collection, we see two different stories of two different survivors of anorexia nervosa. In “First Time” a person recounts the first day that there was the desire to become anorexic. How something as simple as watching television turned into an eye-opening play by play “how to book” on the eating disorder. Realizing that their thoughts quickly turned into desire and then into addiction. An illness that overtook their life. Sharing with us the things that became the priority: weighing, journaling, exercising, and losing everything that made them who they were. Finally, they get the help they need and are able to reflect on what moving forward means. In “Near Death” a person suffering from anorexia nervosa shares the story of the day that they died, literally. On a hike in the desert in conditions unsafe for hiking their body begins to shut down. Eventually they pass out, experience a seizure and end up in the hospital. When released from the hospital the rescuers visit and the youngest of the group makes a simple request, “Life won’t let you die twice.”

54. A Collection of Poems About Gender Equality: Man vs. Woman, Mom Model, All Things Equal

In this collection, we see how a woman deals with the difficult reality of gender equality. In "Man vs. Woman" a mother and father must attempt to explain to their little girl that what the little boys said at school was wrong, that she can do anything they can do. As told through the eyes of the mother the heart break is clear. It is a moment in time when we realize that the things others say can create a belief in even a child that they could hold onto. "Mom Model" tells the story of a young lady who is preparing to give a speech in class about role models. She is the only person in the class who chose to do a woman, her mother. Lastly in "All Things Equal" a high school senior gets this as the prompt for a final paper, no other requirements. Thinking it was an easy A she realized she had no idea what this prompt means. While watching televisions he catches Oprah's speech about equality among men and women and decided this was her destiny. She began to research numbers of inequality, writing them down, amazed at the reality she was living in. the day of the speech she gets a standing ovation from her class, all things could one day be equal, even when all the world says it's not.

55. A Collection of Poetry About Depression: Who Am I, Quiet Voices, Say "I Love Me"

In this collection we see a woman (**could easily be edited for a young man as well**) that is addressing her awareness of her depression. In "Who Am I" she sits in her psychiatrist's office watching her spin in her chair and click her pen, making notes on her yellow notebook. Her hypersensitivity allows her to see all the things in others and not in herself. But when she dives into how she got to sit in that seat we see her soul in a very precious way. In "Quiet Voices" we dive into the internal conversations that people living with depression must fight through on a daily basis. The fight of listening to what is in your head versus what you try to know to actually be the truth of the life you are living. It is a poem that shows how powerful those inner voices can be and gives an idea to those not experiencing it how debilitating it can be to not be able to turn off the negativity that comes with depression. Finally, in "Say, I Love Me" a woman has a daily mantra that she fights to actually say. Staring at herself in the mirror she is forced to see all of the things that she thinks are real then reflect on what is actually real. Finally, she gets to a point where she can say "I love me." This poem shows us that these three little words are a fight for some people but getting to the end should definitely be celebrated.

56. A Collection of Poetry About the Confinement of Religion: Mother Said, Confinement

In this collection, we address the challenges that religion can bring for women. There is no specific religion mentioned within the two poems in this collection but both are written with the same feel of women being taught how to think, present themselves in order to gain the proper status to become someone who is desirable as a wife. In "Mother Said" this storyteller reflects back on all of the things that her mother told her from a young child until the present. In listening to the reflection, it is clear that the women are not seen as equals to their male counterparts. The poem gives strength to the mother in her beliefs as to what she will pass on to her daughter. Finally, the daughter starts to take

off all of the things that have been holding her down and shielding her from the outside world and she stands in front of a mirror and looks at herself for the first time. In “Confinement” as the title implies we hear a young woman speak about what confinement is. With the use of other words that mean the same thing we hear her speak of things that can be confined finally ending with women. As the poem comes to an end she decides that she will break free from her own confinement and become the woman she is supposed to be. ***This collection does not address any specific religion.

57. A Collection of Poetry About The Las Vegas Mass Shooting 2017: *Country Song, Last Date with Daddy*

In the wake of living in a country where mass shooting happen far to often a collection of poems addresses this phenomenon. In *Country Song* a young woman recounts her evening at the country music festival that ended up being the background for the Las Vegas Shooting. She lists off very early the four songs that she could possibly write to signify her experience that night. Like any good country song, they are all relevant, personal and passionate. The last being “I Love My Daddy” who was there by her side when she woke up in the hospital the next day after being shot and trampled at the event. Sometimes all we need is a little country to tell a solid story. Then we move to *Last Date with Daddy* which chronicles a father daughter date that neither one of them will ever forget. A trip that they both were so excited about happened to be the same night of the Las Vegas Mass Shooting of 2017. In the midst of the mayhem she loses sight of her father and finds herself standing in the middle of a now war zone looking for her hero, her father. Finally, she finds his boot and stands in that spot looking for him when a stranger tells her that he had been scooped up and taken to the hospital. Time has passed, they are both back home and safe. She tells him that she didn’t want her last date with him to be that night, daddy’s little girl.

58. A Collection of Poetry About African American Boys Looking for Their Superheroes: *Looking for My Superhero, Older/ Wiser, Black Men Run*

This collection will challenge the reader as well as the performer. In our present America African American boys and men are often criminalized. When this happens from a distance there are young black boys in search for their heroes. The men that look like them, live like them and can teach them how to not only be men but be strong black men. In this collection we tell three different stories of the search for black superheroes. *Looking for My Superhero* deals with a young boy who finds his heroes in the toys he plays with while remembering the father that he once had who walked away from him. He then realizes that his hero can live in his mother as well. To *Older/ Wiser* where we see a teenage boys’ attempt to speak about his hero. It forces him to actually look. He finds his heroes in the comic books he read and expands to the African American history he knows. Lastly, we have *Black Men Run* which addresses a teenage boy’s reality of what the world would look like if black men were in charge. A historical reminder that leaders are bread and born in all races and we can definitely thrive and see the world differently no matter who is in charge. A strong, heartfelt and emotional collection that will make the audience stop, listen and search their hearts for what is really true in life.

59. A Collection of Poetry About Girls of Color Being Enough: Not Black Enough- Not White Enough, For a Black Girl

This collection addresses the idea of being a mixed girl telling the stories of what it feels like to be in her shoes. Being mixed race with black and white, having people look at you and not know what you are mixed with and not ask but just look at you wondering. In *For a Black Girl* we hear the voice of a mixed girl sharing her experience of being good, talented, pretty but...only for a black girl. Then to get the compliment "You're pretty for a black girl." What is behind this comment? As if just being a black girl isn't good enough to hold the compliment. And in *Not Black Enough- Not White Enough* we hear her voice share what it feels like to not be black enough or white enough to fit in or be accepted by any group. The feeling of isolation and loneliness that people feel when a group that they are a part of tells them that they don't represent it enough to be accepted by the masses. The collection is a great example of what it feels like to look well put together on the outside and what it really feels like on the inside to be alone especially when it feels like an attack on their race, the main thing their parent gave to them.

60. A Collection of Poetry About the Life of a Red Head: Red is Born, The Red of Rain Hurts

In this collection we get to see a few sides of the red head. Putting to rest all of the rumors we properly address what makes a red a red. In *Red is Born* we hear the fun story of how a woman was born and how in that instant when her parents saw her and her red hair for the first time that they knew that something wonderful had just been born. Someone who would be an opinionated handful of fun stories for the duration of her life. She tells us of the attitude that she has and how it was handed down to her from her mother who was also a red head. She talks about the Red Strength that she had when her father died, and she supported her mother. And she sums it up with the Red Life that she has lived. In *The Red of Rain Hurts* we see the other side of her. The side that is more emotional than anyone who is looking at her would think. Her mother tried to warn her about the feelings she would endure but it wasn't until she experienced it that she knew. Where some would be sad, she feels so much deeper. A look into a few different facets of being a red head.

61. A Collection of Poetry About the Fetishization of Asian Women and Culture: Be Yourself, Stronger Than I Seem

In this collection we are allowed to see behind the lens of the challenges of being a young Asian American woman in the present time. In *Be Yourself* we hear the heart of a young Asian American woman who remembers back to per school and the mean things that her Caucasian counter parts said to her, all things that make her look at herself as if she is as ugly as they say she is. But in the present, she is bombarded with articles, research and new reports that Asian women are being fetishized by other women. Trying to change their physical appearance to look like them, dressing like them, gluing their eyes to reflect their eyes. It then makes her realize that she is

beautiful and the “trend” that is Asian American women and their culture is an insult that they just don’t understand and never will. In *Stronger Than I Seem* we address the stereotypes of Asian American women and the idea that none of it is true. She speaks of the strength and pride that she has in being who the strong people in her life raised her to be. This collection makes us look at ourselves and the things that we see online or hear in person and dismiss not realizing that it is unacceptable behavior that must be changed. She owns her heritage. She owns her strength. She owns exactly who she is.

*****Performance is written for an Asian woman.**

62. *A Collection of Poetry About Not Being Good Enough for Parents: Never Satisfied, Acceptance, Rabbit Hole of Failure*

In this collection we are shown how difficult it is to be a wonderful teenager. As this character shares the challenges faced when no matter what they do they will never be good enough for their parents. Not because they genuinely aren’t trying but because they are constantly being compared to their siblings, a shadow they cannot get out from behind. In *Never Satisfied* they give a day in their life where perfection isn’t perfect because their parents are never satisfied. In *Acceptance* they relive the day they rush home to tell their parents that they have been accepted into the best school in the state. The sadness in this success is when the parents slowly dig a hole into their smile stealing it away with every negative comment finding more interest in the evening paper and their tea than in their child’s success. And finally, in *Rabbit Hole of Failure* like Alice we fall down the rabbit hole and remember that sometimes even in our dreams that seem so real and positive and make us not want to wake up- eventually we must. Reality comes back to life and we are left reminded of our failures but wishing our dreams could be our reality. This collection is heartbreaking while touching on a truth that is real for many people who fight for their parents to see them as what they are, not what they want them to be.

*****This collection is written from the female perspective but can easily be changed to fit a male performer.**

63. *A Collection of Poetry About the Cycle of Incarceration in America: My First Time In, The Cycle Continues*

A collection about a person who was a teenager when they went into prison. We see two sides of them: the angry teenager he was back when they went in and the adult who knows the game in the present day. The teenager is aware of the street and the danger that it had and their life started out in a positive way but as life happens and things change that are out of their control they move with it. Sometimes moving with it is moving in a negative direction that one can’t turn back from. When they get out, they stand in the street of where they called home and realize that the prison system is not set up for rehabilitation but rather for failure. How do you succeed? How do you not become of the revolving door? Has anything changed?

*****Performer has author’s permission to edit as needed to fit male or female performers. *****

64. *A Collection of Poetry About the Wishes a Teacher Has for Their Students: A Wish for Little Black Boys, I Wish My Children Would, Complain*

One of the most important relationships that a child can have is that between them and their teacher. Someone who spends a lot of time with them and has the opportunity on a daily basis to make a difference in their lives. It might be that they are the person that the child goes to when they need a safe place to eat lunch, need someone to listen to the problems that they have left behind at home or someone to tell them they understand that life is hard. In *A Wish for Little Black Boys*, a teacher expresses their understanding of what life is and could be for black boys. A hope of change and a prayer for safety. In *I Wish My Children Would* is it an ode to the dreams that a teacher has for their students that they may never fully understand or achieve but the teacher believes in them that they can do anything. And finally, in *Complain*, a view into the mind of a teacher that has a difficult student. Asking the questions, they would love answers to, hoping that the student's complaints can turn into something positive.

65. *A Collection of Poetry About the Dynamics of Divorce: Mom Said, Dad Said, Child Said*

There are many things that can tear a family apart. Divorce is one that takes a family and turns it upside down never to be right side up again. In this collection a seemingly normal family reflects on the life that they had and how that life, over time changed, and how that change eventually left all of the members of the family broken. Told from the perspective of all of the members of the family: mom, dad and child this collection explores how we get to the final moment of a divorce. Every family is different. Every mom, dad and child is different. But the goal is to show that each person has their own story to tell within the tragedy of divorce. Each poem begins with what they said last then going backwards so that the audience learns how we got where we are, and finally ending with the first thing they said. Divorce is not a decision to be made easily. It is an emotional experience that affects a family for the rest of their lives.

***The poem of "child" can be male or female and can be edited as necessary by the performer.

66. *A Collection of Poetry About Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Red Gray White Black, The Count, Obsessed*

A day in the life of someone suffering from OCD or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder can be a difficult one full of repetitions that can be debilitating and stop their ability to live. In *"Red Gray White Black"* we see how someone with OCD can hold onto a color and it takes them into another world of connection. For them red may represent a flower but that thought takes them hours to let go of, to a point of obsession. In *"The Count"* we hear the inner monologue of someone living with the disease. How does their mind work? How do they make it through a day? How long does it take them to get ready for work and get out the door? It is sadly a continuous

game of counting to achieve their moment to moment goals to live their life. In *"The Obsessed"* we see what someone with OCD understands their life to be as they reflect on their lives. Remembering back to a time when they were normal and reminding us that they would love nothing more than to go back to that time but the repetition won't let them go anywhere but where they are, in the moment, doing their routines. They just want to be normal, they just want to live again.

*****This piece is not written specifically for a male or female.**

67. A Collection of Poetry About Machismo Mindset in the Latin Community: *What is Machismo?, If I Have a Son, Celebrate*

It is difficult to understand the differences in cultures and the expectations that they have. In the Latino community the idea of "machismo" is often a topic of conversation. What does it mean? How do you get it? Where did it come from? Am I an outcast if I just don't have it? This collection focuses and in some instances refocuses our lens on the topic. In *"What is Machismo?"* we listen as a son has a conversation with his mother about the answer to this topic soon realizing that she worries that she didn't teach him this important aspect of his life but he puts her at ease, he's a great man and she did that. In *"If I Have a Son"* we listen to all of the amazing kinds of acceptance that a man will have for his son should he ever have one and finally in *"Celebrate"* a Latino man reflects on the things that in the eyes of his father, could make or break him having "Machismo." From the constant reminders that he's not manly enough to the beatings to toughen him up. He finally turns eighteen and is expecting his reward, his one big moment of manhood and the day comes and goes with nothing. He looks in front of his mirror and has to decide who he sees himself as.

68. A Collection of Poetry About the Endless Search for Love: *Missing, The Search*

Love might be the most difficult concept anyone will ever experience. It is that thing that we all want because from what we have heard it gives us the most amazing feeling. But when love is always running in the opposite direction of where you are, love becomes the thing in the far away distance that is never really tangible. But we never stop wanting it, never stop hoping that the next relationship will be "the one." The last time we have to yearn for it. In *Missing* we hear the story of someone who has found love but then loses it and spends a lot of their time trying to understand why this has happened to them. Asking the person who holds the love why they won't give it to them anymore. In *The Search* it is the game of hide and seek that people looking for love may feel like they are playing. Never the right person, never the right time, never finding love and yet we never give up. It is the painful reality that we want love so much we will never walk away from the possibility of actually having it even if it means years of wanting what you can't have.

*****This collection can be done by either a male or a female poet. The poet has permission from the writer to edit as needed.**

69. A Collection of Poetry About Missing Black Children: *Where is He, Unseen, Dark History*

Growing up the missing children in America had a place to live on the side of a milk carton. But where were and are the missing black children? In this collection we deal with the very real story of the fact that African American children go missing and do not get the resources to be found like other children. In “Where is He” a parent asks the question and must brave the conversation they have to have with the policeman that comes to their door. In “Unseen” we dive into the idea of a child walking down the street and then they are gone. To ensure that people understand how simple and fast it can happen to them, to any of us. And finally, in “Dark History” we look into the history of the African American and how that history is being taught and torn away at the same time. That as children disappear it vastly affects what our history will be if no one is here to write it and live it. This is a collection into the historical darkness of missing African American children and how that is affecting all of us in different ways. Missing is terrifying, missing for a lifetime is truly tragic. *****This collection may be performed by a male or female student.**

70. A Collection of Poems About Women Finding Their Voice (Strength): *Beaches, Dead Voice, Today*

For far too long the voice of the woman has been silenced, ignored or overlooked. In this collection we address the fact of the voice being lost, and end with the day that her voice makes its appearance for all to hear. In *Beaches* the voice of a woman is compared to the beach, a place that people want to be but so many never experience. Exploring the idea that there are many things in our lives that we silence and often don't know it. In *Dead Voice* we are reminded of all of the things that women's voices should be standing for and yet is often overlooked in the recognition of its purpose. And finally, in *Today* the silence is broken and the voice of a woman speaks for all to hear. The importance of this poem is to create the balance of what was for some women and takes the audience through the journey of getting to the point in life where speaking is a powerful tool that she will use. It is the golden ticket moment that all people, not just woman, should hope to get to. Where we can speak and be heard. Speak and not be told that what we have to say isn't relevant. Speak and unapologetically accept that this place is exactly where we should always be. An ode to the struggle women have had, and some still struggle with to speak and be listened to.

71. A Collection of Poems About Loving You for You: *The Shell, That One Moment, Forever Dance*

In *The Shell* we hear the fast moving thoughts of someone who believes that within the shell of who she is lives nothing. But she hopes to find its contents and fill herself back up again and live. In *That One Moment* we are taken on an emotional ride of

the bet date of this woman's life. Not because she found her knight in shining armor but because the person across from her made her feel like she had always wanted to feel. In that moment she stopped listening to all of the voices in her head and realized that she was worth something, she was special and finally living as a princess. And finally in, *Forever Dance*, an in depth evaluation of the idea of "self-esteem" is evaluated. If it comes from your elf, as it seems to state what happens when you can't bring yourself to love yourself? An honest look at how challenging it can be to try to find the confidence that it takes to love yourself. But she speaks of a dance, finding that one person and engaging in the dance of your life with your final dance partner. This poem is a reflection of what the poet feels is all of our goals, to find that person that is for us and spend the rest of our lives dancing to the most amazing music ever knowing that the person dancing with us sees us for who we are. And while what we see may not be perfect it is perfect for them, making it perfect for us. A musical love story written through the words of a poem. *****This collection may be performed by a male or female student.**

72. A Collection of Poetry About the Life of the African American in 2019: Under My Feet, Next Chapter

In recent years we have seen a rise in the rate that African Americans, men and women alike, are being killed and in most publicized cases it is by the police. The purpose of this collection is to attempt to inform the audience as to the feelings that African Americans have on a daily basis. Doing something as simple of being in their own house has proven time and time again to not be a safe place. If you can't life safely in your own home imagine the stress of leaving home. In *Under My Feet* begins as the story of an African American person opening their door and telling us all of the things that they see in their neighborhood, and it is a fantastic place to live. He speaks about the things they step over to get to the daily paper. It is the headlines that shift the perfect day to the darkness that is their internal reality. The poem is a hard-hitting reality with headline quotes from the year. By the end they realize the things on the ground are the bodies of all of the people who have been murdered in the headlines. In *Next Chapter* we see someone looking for the next chapter of African American history in the library and they can't find it. Throughout the poem the fear is that no one is writing it. That in years to come like so many important things in American history they too will be forgotten as an important part of what American was and has come to be. It is important to memorialize the presence of all people within the books that our children will learn from. If not, who will tell the stories? How will any of us live past the now?

73. A Collection of Poetry About Reflections on Being Puerto Rican: For the Love of Puerto Rico, I Hate Maria

Puerto Rico is a beautiful island paradise that visitors often take for granted. It is located right on the ocean so that its shores are home to some of the most amazing beaches but that is only what people who don't live there see. This collection is from

the heart of a native. Someone who knows Puerto Rico very well and calls it home. A place where the skin of its native sons and daughters has been kissed by the sun and the view of life from their perspective is calm and enchanting. Always recognizing the importance of family, the balance of having everything you need and not realizing that you don't have as much as others because it doesn't matter and the most important part of home- Mama's cooking. The poem *For the Love of Puerto Rico* shares with us everything there is to love about the island from the views to the food and the all-around feeling of home. From sun rise to sunset the life of turning in constant circles, what it means to live life there. Which is balanced with *I Hate Maria*, a poem that tells of the destruction that hurricane Maria left on the island at the point of impact and still many years after.

74. A Collection of Poetry About the Aftermath of Gun Violence: *Guilt, Change, Fear*

Gun violence has become the norm for many school-aged children and educators across the country. In this collection we explore the aftermath of gun violence. Mirroring an event that is similar to Sandy Hook, two people describe what was taken from them after a school shooting. In "Change", a now young woman recounts her experience the day an active shooter showed up at her school. She explores the innocence that was stolen from her and others and the call to do something about gun violence across the country. While she does not have the answer, she just wants things to 'change'. In "Guilt", the young girl's teacher recounts her desire to be an educator and the memory of a simple mistake made the day of an attack. She is racked with guilt at the prospect of a failure in her mind to perform a simple task. In "Fear" we see the broken down and rebuild of a relationship between a mother and her remaining child after her son is killed in the Columbine shooting. The child recalls her mother holding her, crying and living in the fear of the left behind child. Trying to keep them safe. Until the day the child becomes an adult and decides to be a teacher, and like the true cycle of life the child holds the parent as they both seek to push away the fear of the past. These pieces are not only about what is left behind after a school shooting, but instead a subtle call to action regarding gun control. Note: Gender of both girl in class and teacher can be altered to suit the performer.

75. A Collection of Poetry About Broken Family Dynamics: *Daddy is Missing, Swinging Door, When I Marry*

This collection of poetry addresses how someone deals with the absence of a father. In *Daddy is Missing* we hear the ideas of things going missing and people looking for them. What is that like? To be the face on a milk carton or the person a flyer? But for this person they are looking for their father. He was a presence for a while and then, he was gone. How does someone move on from that moment or do they continue to search all of their lives? In *Swinging Door*, the last moment that a child sees their father is visualized in a difficult poem. Through their eye's daddy leaves with a suitcase, but it is the physical response of the mother that makes the child

understand the situation. Lastly, in *When I Marry* a very honest and at times humorous poem that deals with someone expressing all of the reasons that they are never getting married. But when the truth comes to light it is realized that their reality says if they never marry they will never have to divorce.

*This collection may be performed by any gender actor.

76. *A Collection About African American Women and Their Natural Hair: Ode to My Natural Queens, I Am Not My Hair*

African American women are in a movement that is gaining momentum. Women often wear their hair the way it looks best to them. For some women the options are minimal and for others endless. African American women have often been criticized in the media, social media and the conversation continues, "Natural or not natural?" Many people don't see why this is even a conversation but because it is and continues to be it is worth talking about. In this collection we address why this is a topic of discussion and share some poetic viewpoints. *Ode to My Natural Queens* is a thank you letter to all women past and present who have chosen to wear their hair the way they want to wear it, unapologetically. And in *I Am Not My Hair*, the poet tells it like it is. Women, men, anyone should be able to wear their hair anyway and still be seen for who they are not they stereotypes their hair is believed to represent. The goal of this collection is for the audience to understand that we are all different, and our hair is just a piece of who we are, it is not all of who we are, all of what we represent, and it is not a pass to be treated like anything or anyone other than that which is represented in our full personality and presence. Accept that wearing natural hair is as beautiful as anything else. I mean honestly, it's just...well hair.

77. *A Collection of Poetry About the Stories of Immigration: Senses, No More Boats*

It is time to gain some understanding about what it means to be an immigrant. Through the eyes of an immigrant we are able to see inside of their family before things brought them to leave their home while also analyzing the assumptions of those who stand far away but yet in judgement of them. *Senses* is a poem that talks about how much a person from Mexico remembers their land and what it means to them. Using a series of images that poetically revolves around our five senses. What does your life look like through your sense of: smell, sight, taste, touch and the things we hear? It is a beautiful reflection of a life that we don't understand because we haven't seen it but through the story it is clear that these memories are fond, and heart felt. On the other side is the poem *No More Boats*. This poem is a harsh and honest reality check about the obstacles that people go through to get to leave their homeland and to get here. Using satire, it addresses and makes fun of the thoughts that people have, believe or voice about immigrants. In the end it brings us back to the reality that being an immigrant isn't easy and often it is a choice that was difficult to make. A poem that makes you sit back and reflect on your thoughts of immigrants, immigration in America and the challenges that they experience to get close to the dream that they believe lives here.

78. A Collection of Poems About Gambling Addiction: *Chasing, Sold, Meetings*

When you have never been addicted it is difficult to understand how an addict can do what they do, hurt the people they hurt, dig themselves in holes and jump in and bury themselves. In *Chasing* we are in a hidden room as an addict goes through. The levels of darkness that they fall into and what they are looking for. Constantly chasing that high that they got the first time. In *Sold* a gambling addict share with us the things that they have been willing to sell in order to keep betting, keep living the dream that has turned into a nightmare that they can't wake up from. Finally, in *Meetings* we see the addict, full circle, taking that first step towards getting their life back. Will they make it through, or will they wake away from the meeting and tell themselves that they will be back? Do they ever make it back? Is any addict every really clean? *Performer may be of any gender and adjustments to text may be made to reflect this.

79. A Collection of Poems About the Difficulties of Understanding and Appreciating Your Mother: *Sometimes, Adulthood Sucks, Apology Poem*

Some would say that the most difficult relationship is that between a mother and her daughter. In this collection we explore a damaged relationship between mother and daughter. In *Sometimes* the daughter expresses how more times than not she hates her mother. Within the poem she shares the nights of being homeless and not being able to feel like she had a home but it through the eyes of a child we are drawn to agree with her. In *Adulthood Sucks* the young girl has grown up. She is now a mother and living on her own. In her reflection she realizes all of the things that she now doesn't know because when her mother spoke, she turned her off and didn't listen. How much easier would her life be right now if she has listened to her mother when she was a teenager? What did she miss? And finally, in *Apology Poem* we see the next stage of this woman's life as she sits next to her dying mother and apologies for all of the things that she did and didn't do throughout her life. A coming-of-age story that reminds us to appreciate our parents and all of the advice they have to give because at some point in life, those wise words will drift away with the people that we called mom and dad.

80. A Collection of Poetry About Not Being the POC Stereotype: *I'm Not That Person, Check, A Little Secret, Where I Belong*

The challenges of being a person of color come in many different realities. In this collection of poetry, we see the perspective and experience of an African American person (male or female) who is not the stereotype and it bothers them that the assumptions that people make about them are wrong. But how do you fix an idea that someone comes to the table with before you've even introduced yourself? In *I'm Not That Person* we are reminded that what you knew isn't always what you actually know. Don't put what you think to be fact on anyone else. In *Check* we dive into the

list of things that people are true, a check list of what is supposed to be, and what is believed to be. As long as all of the boxes are checked things are in order. In *A Little Secret* we make light of some of the most popular stereotypes then bring back the focus that these things could be any one of us and if we're being honest it is. And finally, in *Where I Belong*, we hear an anthem of originality and come to the realization that we belong where we decide we belong, this isn't a place anyone can put us because it is not their decision.

*This program may be performed by an African American male or female author gives permission for this change.

81. *A Collection of Poetry About Having Patience in Our Search for Love: Never Been Loved, Just Wait, It's Not a Race*

As human beings we all want to be loved. It is a natural feeling that is at the forefront of our minds from a very young age. But the older we get the more we should realize that love is not something that we have control over, and it is often when we become desperate for love that we lose our patience and start trying to try to control love on our own. In this collection we look at the importance of having patience in our search for love. In *Never Been Loved*, we hear the story of a person that feels that they have never been loved and how they deal with not having control over finding it. In *Just Wait*, we hear the story of someone who has tried to force love into their lives but continues to fail. In *It's Not a Race*, we watch someone running a race to find love but it is not until the end that they realize that love is not something that can be caught, it is something that is not a race towards but rather something to wait patiently for.

***Only available in the collection: Just Telling Stories III

82. *A Collection of Poetry About Being Gay and the Fear of Finally Coming Out: Games, Behind Locked Doors, Finally Coming Out*

People who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community unfortunately have to find their way through this rite of passage, "Coming Out." The idea is not balanced, or fair, straight people don't have to come out but, in this collection, we ride the roller coaster of someone who explains how and why they've had to be closeted for so long. They share with us the idea of *Games* and that hiding who they were was like a game to them. If they weren't found out they were winning, though so much of their self was losing. In *Behind Closed Doors* we are reminded of the strength that this person has. They know who they are, and they love themselves. The joy they have with the honesty that they have to hide from everyone but themselves. And finally, in *Finally Coming Out*, we hear the final moments before their truth is revealed and their adamant response that they are never going to hide again. A coming of story for all of the people in our rainbow that have fought just to be who they are and share that gift with the world. *This performer may be any gender.

***Only available in the collection: Just Telling Stories III

83. *A Collection of Poems About Living While Black Part 1: Bottled Water for Sale, Jogging in a Pandemic, Birds and Bees for Black Parents*

History tends to go through cycles, repeating itself over and over again. Throughout American history African Americans have experienced continuous cycles of oppression. In recent history there have been many discouraging stories of the treatment of African American people: men, women and children. This collection puts three true tragic stories into a poetic presentation. The hope is to raise awareness of the mistreatment and unjust situations that African American people experience on a daily basis. Not all stories make the news, but these did. These are three of the stories that we are not allowed to forget. These are the stories that will become a part of our history, that just goes to remind us how we are still not created or treated equal. A child selling water, a man jogging in his neighborhood and a parent that has to explain the new birds and bees that only apply to African American people. All sad American realities. ***This collection can be performed by a male or female but the performer must be African American.**

***Only available in the collection: Just Telling Stories III

84. *A Collection of Poetry About Body Dysmorphia: Blind, Pretty, Body View: Or What is Dysmorphia?*

In this powerful collection of poems, we are able to see someone who suffers from body dysmorphia the way that they see themselves. It is sometimes difficult to understand how someone's biggest struggle can be within their own mind. Often, we ask, "Why can't you just change the way you think?" In answering this question, we listen to ***Blind*** a poem that looks at how lucky the blind man is to not have to see. It dives into how the voices in their head that makes them see things in themselves that aren't there are formed. As told through the chapters of the book the blind man is reading. Then we address one of the most difficult words in ***Pretty***. A poem where the poet tells us how it became so important to them to hear someone say this word but also how it then turned into the biggest "bad word" of their vocabulary. And finally, in ***Body View: Or What is Dysmorphia***, we hear what comes out of the other side of this struggle. Giving us example after example of what dysmorphia looks like to those of us who do not struggle with it. All ending with the realization that their mind doesn't have a hold on them anymore and advise for pushing through.

85. *A Collection of Poetry About Being a Single Mother: Perfect Storm, Us, Thankful*

We often see and hear of single parents and the struggles that they have raising their children alone. There are so many things that make these individuals strong and often the heroes of their children. With these words we will celebrate them for the work that they have done to protect their child from all of the bad things and raise them to be wonderful human beings. In this collection we address the story of a single mother. In ***Perfect Storm*** she shares the moment that her life changed as

she looks back at the moment that a chance encounter turned into the memory of her life that she will never forget. The moment she to a chance on a stranger that ended up giving her the greatest gift of her life, her daughter. Then in *Us* she tells us of how she moved forward after he left them with a note which connects to how they originally met each other. And finally, in *Thankful* she unwraps the complete package that is her daughter's growth stages. How she went from carrying her to her daughter growing into a woman who is able to carry herself. A mother's most honorable moment or reflecting on the struggles she once had but was able to shield her child from all of that to mold her into a beautiful human being shifting the focus off of what she lost in her father and what she gained by doing what we as human beings do for our young- absolutely any and everything we have to for their happiness and success. A collection of poems that showcases and shines a positive light on overcoming the struggles of being a single parent while honoring their hard work. *This is from the perspective of the mother not the child. Any performer has permission to adjust pronouns to fit for the teller to be a father. This permission is already given by the author.

86. *A Collection About the Importance of Indian Food Culture: Rhythm of Food, Taste Test*

In the midst of life, one must realize that not every person who lives in America is from America. In this collection we give honor and recognition to not only the Indian culture, but we express the importance of respecting our ancestors and their recipes that have followed us for many generations. In *Rhythm of Food*, we hear the story of the beating drum that comes from the ingredients that make up the special food of the Indian culture. It is a rhythm that all of us have for our own respective ancestry. Making the connection between generations and the recognition that it's just a little bit different when it hits home. And in *Taste Test*, we see a child being taught by their grandmother how to add the right amounts of everything to make it taste just like it would if they were in India. It is possible to relocate to a different country or even a different state, but what you should never lose is who you are, because in you are your parents and your grandparents and all of the generations before them. Holding on to who you are is also a testament to holding on to the food that only you can truly create. Because cooking from the heart, tasting from the soul, can never be duplicated or replaced.

86. *A Collection of Poems About Fear: What I Fear Most, Clouded Mirrors, Fear Freedom*

One of the most debilitating mental health challenges is the idea of anxiety. Anxiety is often connected to stress. But one of the other pieces of anxiety and stress is the idea of fear. As children we are presented with things in our lives that for some reason or another we fear. It maybe the sound of thunder or the big dog next door, but either way these things trigger an emotion within us that may not be understood by others or difficult for us to explain. What we don't realize is that this fear that we gain as a child may manifest itself into our minds as adults. Some of us are able to move forward while others live in fear of many things unfortunately for a

lifetime. In this collection we address different areas of fear in hopes that by talking about it in a way that removes the boogeyman under the bed we're also gaining an understanding that sometimes the things we fear and sometimes mental health is not something that is easily put into words for everyone to understand. Sometimes it is a deep threatening feeling or an inability to breathe or a challenge of doing day-to-day tasks that manifests itself in fear.

87. A Collection of Poems About Growth & Purpose: Growing Weeds, Finding My Way

Everyone who lives and breathes on this earth has a purpose for being here. Some people find their purpose at a very young age and for others they spend most of their lives trying to figure out why they are here and what exactly it is that they are supposed to accomplish. In the following collection we focus on the idea of growth and purpose. In *Growing Weeds*, we are shown the ever-changing picture of growing weeds versus growing and developing people. Sometimes we look at weeds as ugly and they are ruining this other thing that we care more about, that is more pretty, what we don't realize is that a lot of people feel the same way. They are being replaced and cancelled and left behind before they have reached their full purpose or found their stride in life. In *Finding My Way* we follow the footsteps of someone who finds themselves being taken on a ride just trying to figure out where they fit in and what home looks like for them. Because often we don't realize that going through the motions of everyday for some is as good as it gets and for others it's just not good enough. Is a person wrong for wanting more? For saying that this daily life that is on repeat isn't giving me what I need to want to thrive. This collection of poems is something that every adult has gone through, and every teenager struggles with, trying to fit in and finding out exactly where you belong.

88. A Collection of Poems About Being a Woman & Misunderstood: I'm Just Different, Misunderstood

There are a lot of things that we have control over in our lives and a lot of things that we don't. We cannot force others to believe or think the way we do. Nor can we expect others to see us the way that we see ourselves. In this collection we specifically address the idea of being a woman who is different and misunderstood. The poem *I'm Just Different* shares the story of a teenage girl who recognizes that she is not like her classmates. She is secure in the way that she feels about herself recognizing the people she goes to school with don't know how to take her and that makes them nervous, but it doesn't bother her. She tells us about all of the things that make her who she is and the reality by the end of the poem is that as people we need to accept bad everyone is different and just because they're different doesn't mean they're not exactly who they are supposed to be. *Misunderstood* focuses on that exact idea. Misunderstood can mean a lot of things it can mean misunderstood by the clothes that you wear, the way in which you speak, maybe you have an accent, maybe you don't accept being spoken over or spoken at by your male counterparts, maybe you speak with your hands. Separated as individual ideas this

might not bother someone but when it's all put together being received by one person, a woman, it can definitely make life challenging. Worry not, the joy of being a woman is that of course they will share exactly how they feel, uncensored, and uncut.

89. A Collection of Poems About Creating a Safe Space for LGBTQAI+ Individuals: Going to Build a Safe Space, Why is Tolerance So Hard?

In the world centuries ago, decades ago, weeks ago and today people who are members of the LGBTQAI+ community have been under fire. It may be that their decision to live their life as they see fit is being challenged. It is possible that someone wonders if this is real, a game, a phase, what is this exactly. Either way the idea that being in one's own skin is not good enough. That they have to justify who they are and fear the repercussions on a daily basis, is unfair and traumatizing. In this collection we will look at what it is necessary to create a safe space for members of this community. In *Going to Build a Safe Space* we explore the idea of what a safe space looks like, why it's necessary and why it can't be that all spaces are safe spaces. While in *Why is Tolerance So Hard?* We will address this pressing question. Why is tolerance so hard? Why is it necessary for people to live how others have decided they should live? Why is this idea something that continues to be passed down generation to generation making people feel like who they are is less than the next person who has made the conscious decision to go down a different path realizing that the choice I have made for me doesn't have to be the same as yours but that shouldn't mean that you can accept my choice, tolerate my presence and move on. Why can't we just do that?

90. A Collection of Poetry About Encouraging People to Be Themselves: Exhausting, Solo

Being yourself, being the person that you were brought up to be, being the person that you have crafted yourself to be, should be an easy thing. It should be easy to be the only person that you've ever been which is you. Often people of all ages find it difficult to be themselves for a number of reasons. It could be that they are not respected by the people they surround themselves with. Sometimes it happens that they want to create an invisible barrier between them and the people that they call their friends, or their family and they don't feel like they can truly be authentic. In this collection of poetry, we address the idea of not being able to be who you are but encourage people to do exactly that. In *Exhausting* we follow the story of someone and all of the things that they do for other people and outside sources that stops them from being able to do things for themselves. Realizing that the energy that we pour into other people's needs is always taking energy away from our own. And in *Solo* we address all of the things that make us individuals and all of the reasons that it is okay to look in the mirror and only see oneself. It is also supported that you celebrate those moments that you have to spend loving who you are in that moment at that specific time in your life. Life is difficult already, but it is even more of a

challenge if the person you spend the most time with isn't someone that you have learned to love.

91. A Collection of Poetry About Anti- Bullying: *Burnt Cake, Stand Up, When I Have a Kid*

A term that everyone around the world has become very aware of is bullying. There are so many disappointing aspects of this personality trait and the more it happens the more disappointing it becomes. Unfortunately, students report being bullied as young as kindergarten for things that they don't even understand and sometimes things that they have no control over like their race or socioeconomic status. The biggest misstep is that the adults in the room are not always doing everything that they can to support students who are being bullied, address and educate students who are the bullies, as well as creating a safety net for all students in all aspects of their young life. This collection deals with anti-bullying. In *Burnt Cake* we use the metaphor of a burnt cake to connect with a teenager that is experiencing bullying and can't quite find the words to ask their parents for help. In *Stand Up* we experience the honest truth about what we are not seeing and are not addressing in the presence of this bullying culture. In *When I Have a Kid*, we hear someone express all of the things that they are and are not going to do in an effort to support their child. Because at the end of the day supporting children is important because at some point, they will grow up to be the adults that lead our world. We must make anti bullying a priority to keep this generation safe as well as the next.

92. A Collection of Poems About Homelessness: *Don't Drive Past, Spare Some Change*

One of the biggest social and economic problems in America as well as other countries is homelessness. This has been an issue with the forefront of our society for many decades and it makes some wonder why it is that we are such a rich nation and yet the disparity is so very clear on our streets, in our shelters, and in all of our major as well as rural cities. The following collection addresses in very honest ways the plight of homelessness. In *Don't Drive Past* we hear from a person who on a daily basis drives past a family that they see on the corner asking for money. For some reason on this specific day, they decided to look in their rearview mirror and what they find is their own reflection. As they express what it is that they see within themselves and what others may see as they sit in judgment of the homeless population they are forced to turn around. Unfortunately, when they go back to the corner the family is gone but maybe, just possibly the actual turn around is within them. In *Spare Some Change* We get a first-hand narrative of a homeless person and the way that they see the world around them. They share with us the things that make their situation a challenge and also the things that people can do to assist them to push forward to the next day. It is a very honest look because they also share with us how it is that they became homeless. We are all human beings and no matter what our financial, mental, physical or other reality is we all deserve respect and support.

93. *A Collection of Poetry About Feminism and Other Gifts: Not the Punchline, I Am a Feminist*

In this collection we first address feminism as it is often addressed, through stand up comedians that really thing that feminism is a punchline. We soon find out that no is laughing as the poem truly does a deep dive into why this is no laughing matter and how important it is to gain understanding of why this is true. Next, we get down to the grit of what feminism really means. Feminism is sometimes a word that we hear thrown around by everyone and sometimes it feels like the most basic understanding of feminism is lost. What does it mean to be a feminist? This poem addresses what feminism is and what it is not. It looks at the assumptions that are made about feminist as well as the reality of what the work is. The importance and the lesson of this collection is that the presence of women in this world is a gift. And one day we will truly realize how special that gift is by allowing women to be treated as equals so that they never have to fight for that right again.

94. *A Collection of Poetry About Gun Violence: Desk Umbrella, Nice Kid*

One item that I believe everyone in America can agree on is that we have far too many school shootings and mass shootings in this country. in this collection we take a look at a school shooting from two different perspectives. 1 from the perspective of the excitement of the first day of school and the second from the perspective of someone we experienced a school shooting but still felt it important to make sure that people knew that the shooter was a nice kid. In *Desk Umbrella* we follow a young high school student through their first day. They're making new friends they're downloading social apps and they're experiencing their teachers and their classes for the first time. But it is in the midst of the speedy pace and the joy of the first day of school that shots are heard. In a matter of seconds their life is changed forever as they find themselves hiding underneath a desk like all of us did in elementary school to keep us safe. In *Nice Kid* We listen to the moments that lead up to the beginning of a school shooting. Hearing from the perspective of a student who knew everyone involved and how bullying can push a teenager who is already struggling with personal experiences and a difficult home life over the edge. But as described in this poem this particular kid was seen as a nice kid. It is important to remember that everyone who makes a bad decision has a family that could potentially love them very deeply and not see them as anything other than nice. *There is no justification for school shooting. There is never a reason to turn to violence.

95. *A Collection of Poetry About Racism: See, Childless*

In recent years beginning in 2020 America went through a reckoning of its own creation. Having to again deal with the fact that racism is still alive and thriving in some parts of this country. In this collection of poetry we address racism from two different lenses, the first the idea of being able to express how you see someone that

looks different than you and the second a poem that was difficult to write as we realize that some people are not having children out of the fear that raising a Black child could potentially result in another Black child's murder. In *See* we experience a Black person describing themselves as they see themselves. But within that we also here how they believe Black people are described based on the experiences that they have had with racism. *Childless* deals with the delicate and difficult decision that some Black people have made to not have children. Unfortunately, they are making this decision based on the fear that their child could potentially be next in this war against Black bodies that we are experiencing in America. This collection is heartbreaking and at the same time heartwarming because at the end we have to realize that we are all different, but it is the moment that we take the time to accept someone who doesn't look like us, or act like us, or represent what we represent and yet we can still look at them as someone whose life is valid and whose voice deserves to be heard. ***This collection should be performed by a Black/ African American student.