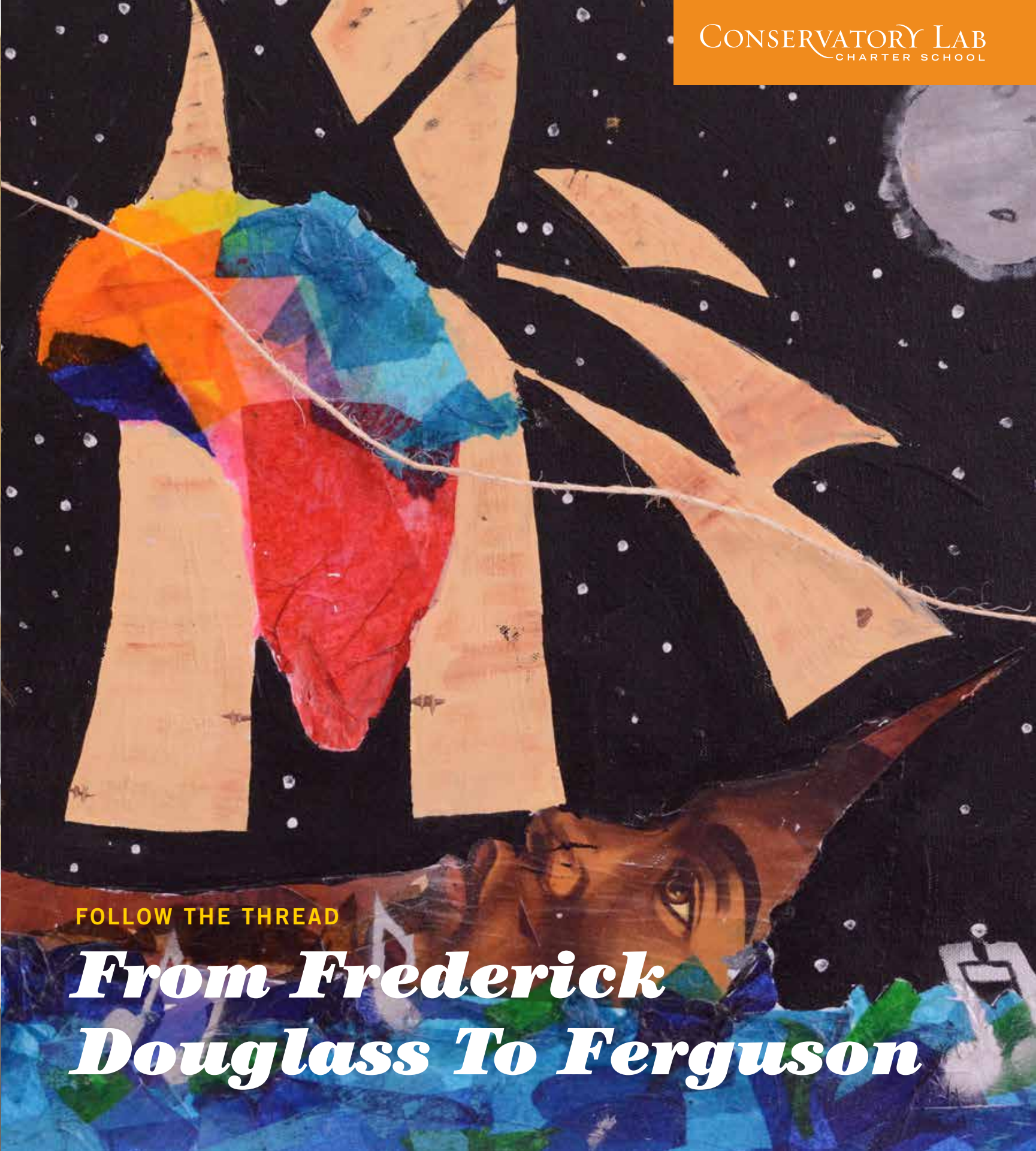


What is the thread that connects the legacy of slavery with the racial violence and injustice we experience today. How can learning about the past help us to understand the present and forge a more just future? 8th graders grapple with these questions through art and writing, taking us on a journey from the Middle Passage to the Black Lives Matter Movement, and ending with an affirmation of their unique identities.



FOLLOW THE THREAD

# *From Frederick Douglass To Ferguson*





We dedicate this book to Diana Lam, our Head of School, who is retiring at the end of this year. Ms. Lam, you have opened so many doors for us. We hope that you always remember us and the work that we have done over the years from kindergarten to 8th grade. You've given us the opportunity to experience things that we never did before—from playing music in an orchestra to putting on our own musical, “The Wild and Wonderful Monkey King.” Thank you for your leadership, dedication, and love.

—JELITZA ROMERO AND THE 2016 8TH-GRADE GRADUATING CLASS

By visiting the past we can see the present and perhaps change the future.

—SHARON DRAPER,  
CHILDREN'S BOOK AUTHOR

FOLLOW THE THREAD

# *From Frederick Douglass To Ferguson*

2016 8TH-GRADE GRADUATING CLASS

CONSERVATORY LAB  
CHARTER SCHOOL

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Join us on the web at [www.conservatorylab.org](http://www.conservatorylab.org)  
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Photographs by Toni Jackson and Salvador Jiménez-Flores  
Teaching Artist: Salvador Jiménez-Flores

QUOTE SOURCES  
p. iii: Julius Lester, *The Blues Singers: Ten Who Rocked the World*  
(New York: Hyperion, 2001).  
p.1: Jeanne Walker Harvey, *My Hands Sing to Blues, Romare  
Bearden's Childhood Journey* (Marshall Cavendish, 2011).

# Introduction

This year was transformative for our 8th graders, who are graduating from Conservatory Lab this June. As Jelitza Romero urges in her poem “Culture,” the class came together as a “COMMUNITY,” each student contributing his or her own point of view as they explored their unique identities and embarked on a yearlong investigation to discover the historical roots of the racial violence that headlines today’s news and shapes students’ daily lives. Their learning took on urgency as they sought answers to questions about race and power, oppression and resistance—and raised their voices to speak out and make a difference in their community.

Conservatory Lab is a K1- 8 music-infused charter school in the heart of Boston. We use Expeditionary Learning as a framework for our unique, interdisciplinary curriculum that features hands-on learning experiences where what we are doing matters to us and has consequences. We believe in the power of music to transform the lives of children and adolescents. We are the only school in the country to incorporate El Sistema, a unique program designed to effect social change and nurture promising futures for underserved communities through intensive, ensemble-focused music education.

This book of mixed media art, poetry, stories, and essays is the final product for the 8th-grade interdisciplinary Humanities expedition—From Frederick Douglass to Ferguson. During the expedition, Frederick Douglass became a catalyst for students to use the power of their own voices to advocate for change. Inspired by a Boston Globe article about a stalled project to build a monument to Frederick Douglass in Roxbury, students wrote to the Mayor, the Boston Art Commission, the Boston Globe, and the Bay State Banner, arguing what the statue would mean for the city in general, and for children of color in particular.

Their voices were heard! The Boston Art Commission invited students to present their case at a public meeting. According to Dumas Lafontant of the Friends of Frederick Douglass,

the students’ efforts revived the project. The Commission later invited students to participate in a community meeting announcing a new location for the statue. At the meeting, students gave a stirring performance of their own version of “Amazing Grace,” giving it new meaning by incorporating spoken-word verses from the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. Students efforts on behalf of the statue have drawn the attention of the Boston Globe and Channel 5’s WCVB CityLine.

Mr. Lafontant praised students for their civic engagement. “Your efforts helped push the statue project forward. People always say that young people are the leaders of tomorrow. But with your actions, you have shown that young people are leaders of today. I hope you continue to choose to fight for justice and equity throughout your lives.”

Our 8th graders have been inspired by leaders from the past—from Frederick Douglass to Sojourner Truth to Malcolm X—as well as role models from their own communities—artist Salvador Jiménez Flores, community organizer Dumas Lafontant, Boston Art Commission Vice-Chair and artist Ekua Holmes, and Boston Globe reporter Astead Herndon. Though experience, they have learned that “if there is no struggle, there is no progress.” And they have learned that with a vision and perseverance they can strive for their dreams and accomplish what they never before imagined possible.

Diana Lam, Head of School

**If there is no struggle,  
there is no progress.**

—FREDERICK DOUGLASS



A caged bird sings. It sings, even in the darkest of times and the saddest of moments. It sings, even with clipped wings, consumed with rage. But in order to sing, a language must be learned, a vocabulary must be acquired, and a reason must be present.

As a teacher, it is tragic to see students confined like caged birds by their studies. It is difficult to see students who are trapped by the constant news reports of the murder of unarmed black and brown people, thwarted by the economic difficulties within their communities, and alienated by a curriculum that does not reflect who they are.

Trapped! Caged!

As teachers, we can open the cage door by asking questions that pave the way to understanding and engagement. Questions like: How did we get here? What is the thread that connects slavery to the racial violence of today? Where is our power?

In an attempt to answer these questions, 8th graders began the year investigating how colorism impacts the way they see themselves and others, and looking closely at the racial violence that sparked today’s Black Lives Matter Movement. To discover how we got here, we looked to the past—from the Ancient African Civilizations to the Middle Passage to American Slavery to the Reconstruction era to Jim Crow—and discovered the many ways black people resisted, struggled, and survived

**But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.**

—MAYA ANGELOU

despite relentless and overwhelming obstacles. We investigated why millions of black men, women, and children left their homes in the South and moved North during the Great Migration, and we were inspired by the explosion of artistic expression by the musicians, sculptors, painters, poets, and writers of the Harlem Renaissance.

As we unraveled the past we forged connections and understandings about how all of these historical events played a major role in how our society functions today. We developed a language to help us name societal problems and acquired a vocabulary to address the violent circumstances surrounding individuals such as Emmett Till, Malcolm X, Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin. Our learning provided a safe place to discuss the issues that affect us the most, to explore history, and to become skilled writers and interpreters of text.

As the school year comes to an end, we can sing, whether it be the enduring spiritual “Amazing Grace” or our own words used to petition for a statue of a fearless freedom fighter in our neighborhood. The cage door is open. The caged birds can see through their bars of rage and spread their wings, free to explore and change the future, grounded in a firm understanding of a history rarely taught—our history.

Valencia Patilla  
7th and 8th Grade Humanities Teacher

# Poets, Authors, and Artists

## 6 The Middle Passage

Amistad  
How it Feels to Be on a Slave Ship

Arianna Rodriguez, Yisam Tiger Laracuente  
Christopher Henriquez, words by Shana Pinnock,  
art by Kateri Gerald-Burns

## 7 Slavery and Resistance

Meet Henry “Box” Brown  
The Bloody Pain  
The Struggle

Jahsiah Montissol, Jessica Lopez,  
Winy Rodriguez  
Kiara Escobar, Lilibeth Arias  
Jessica Lopez  
AJ Santos

## 8 Frederick Douglass

Away From Mom  
The Fight for Freedom  
Attempt to Escape (excerpt)  
Letters to the Mayor Walsh  
“Dorchester Students Push for  
Frederick Douglass Statue”

Laura Fernandez, Lilbeth Arias  
Antwanai Miller  
Ideal Lobo-Mason  
Laura Fernandez  
Kateri Gerald-Burns, Arianna Rodriguez  
Boston Globe, April 2016

## 9 Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois

The Great Migration and  
the Harlem Renaissance  
The Great Migration North  
The Harp: A Song of Hope and Freedom

Kateri Gerald-Burns, Kelsey Sandoval,  
Ideal Lobo-Mason  
Jelitza Romero and Mariel Roman  
Kiara Escobar  
Yisam Tiger Laracuente

## 10 Malcom X

Christopher Henriquez, Kiara Escobar,  
Quintin Bayas

## 11 Black Lives Matter

Hands Up Don’t Shoot  
Darrell Wilson Indictment  
Super Bowl 50 Controversy  
Hate  
Don’t Dehumanize Me

Shana Pinnock, Antwanai Miller, Anthony Vega  
Kiara Escobar  
Mariel Roman  
Yisam Tiger Laracuente  
Quintin Bayas  
Jahsiah Montissol

## 12 I Am Beautiful

I’m beautiful  
As Long As I Think I’m Beautiful  
Gringa  
Culture  
Born to Sing  
Basketball  
I am beautiful

AJ Santos, Trayvon Ricks  
AJ Santos  
Anthony Vega  
Kelsey Sandoval  
Jelitza Romero  
Winy Rodriguez  
Trayvon Ricks  
Antwanai Miller, Arianna Rodriguez,  
Christopher Henriquez, Ideal Mason-Lobo,  
Jahsiah Montissol, Jessica Lopez,  
Kateri Gerald-Burns, Kiara Escobar,  
Laura Fernandez, Lilibeth Arias, Mariel Roman,  
Quintin Bayas, Yisam Tiger Laracuente,  
Shana Pinnock



When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate and quite overpowered with sorrow and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. . . . I asked if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces and long hair?

—OLAUDAH EQUIANO

## ***The Middle Passage*** **c. 1600-1800**

During the Middle Passage, Africans were captured from their native lands and subjected to severe torture. Once loaded into the belly of the slave ship, the captured Africans remained shackled and deprived of air and food during the voyage to the Americas, where they were sold at auction or exchanged for products such as tobacco and sugar. They suffered from horrid sanitary conditions and fear of the unknown. The Middle Passage marked the beginning of U.S. slavery—the catalyst for broken souls and desperation.

Is it not enough that we are torn from  
our country and friends...?

—OLAUDAH EQUIANO



## Amistad

BY CHRISTOPHER HENRIQUEZ

Resistance is the act of opposing.

The Amistad set sail in 1839 with 53 captured Africans of the Mende tribe on board. The Spanish traders set a course for Puerto Principe, Cuba, with plans to deliver their stolen prisoners to a nearby sugar plantation. The Africans resisted. They rebelled against the horrible fate they had heard about, and revolted against their captors. Their leader, Sengbe Pieh, also known as Joseph Cinque, broke free of his shackles and liberated the other Africans on board.

After seizing the ship, the Africans ordered their Spanish captors to take them back to their home in Africa. Sengbe told the Spaniards to steer east toward Africa. The Spaniards, however, knew it would not end well for them in Africa. They steered the Amistad “east by day, and northwest by night” toward North America with the hope of being rescued by another ship.

The Amistad was towed into Long Island, New York by a U.S. ship. The Africans on board were immediately imprisoned, treated as property, and charged with piracy. After many months and long trials, they were finally declared free men and returned to their African homeland.

The history of the Amistad is a history of resistance. 25,000 Africans were brought from their homelands to Cuba as slaves. Through their courageous act of resistance, the Africans aboard the Amistad rebelled against a cruel and unjust fate. They refused to be enslaved. Their resistance kept them free.



## What It Feels Like to Be On a Slave Ship

BY SHANA PINNOCK

You can smell the stench of death. You are crammed inside an 18-inch shelf. You are chained to the person on your left and on your right and the chains are very heavy and hurt really bad. You can barely stand the foul air and unsteady movement of the ship. You have very little water to drink and only a bowl of rice to eat. Your body is weak and dehydrated. The heat inside you rises.

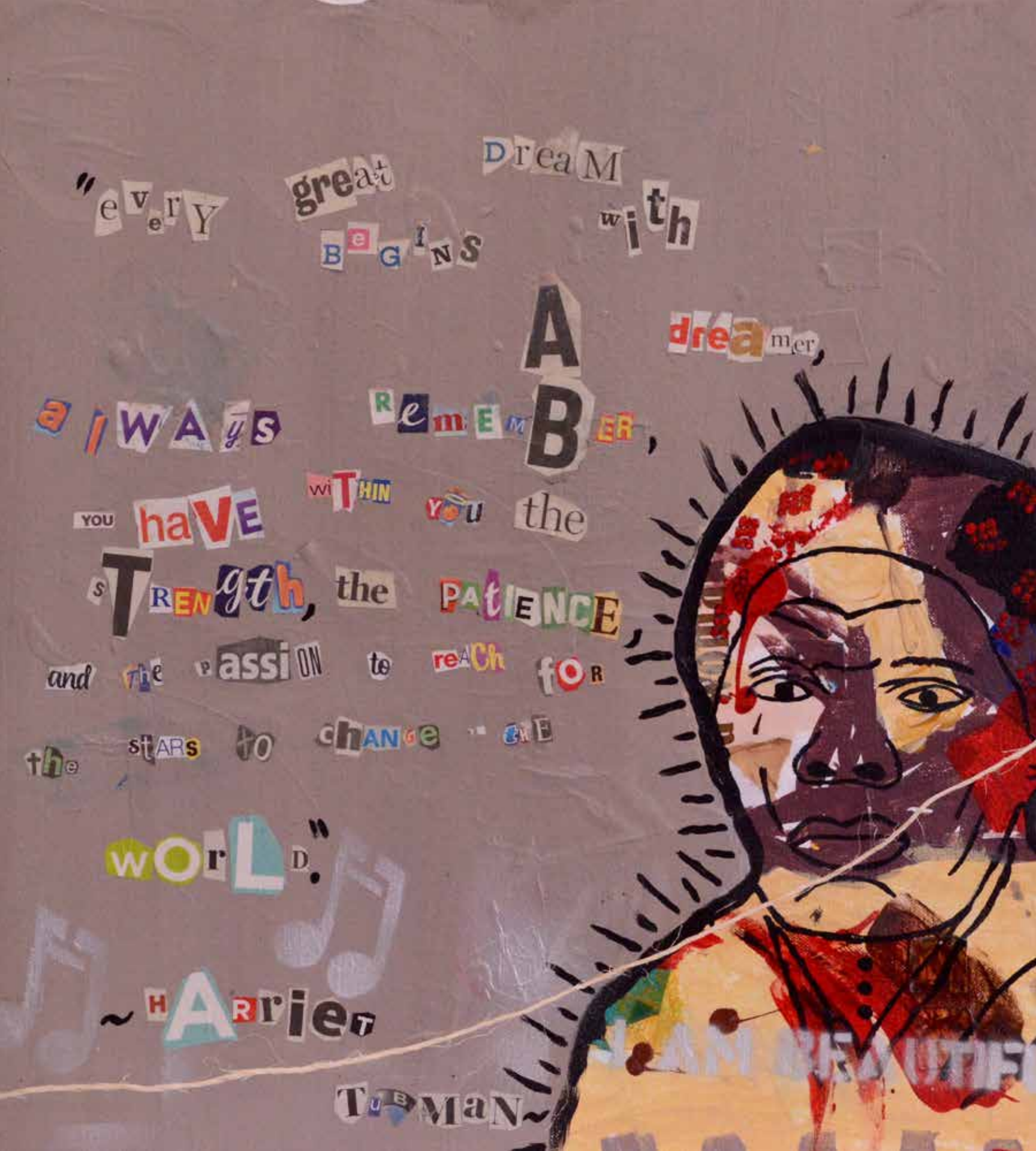
Those around you are really sick. Some of the sick are tossed overboard to drown in the sea. Many are whipped for not eating enough to stay strong or for not following directions. Many have died. You can tell from the empty chains that are left behind.

All you can see is the wood below the deck of the boat and the blue ocean water. You hear the painful cries of the captives being whipped. You feel the pain in their hearts and the wounds on their backs.

You feel the pain of being torn from your family. You feel the sting of loneliness. You begin to lose the precious memories of your family and friends, children and loved ones.

This is what it feels like to be on a slave ship.





I was conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say—I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.

—HARRIET TUBMAN

## *Slavery and Resistance 1619-1865*

The enslaved faced profound suffering—from the loss of family members to the loss of their religion, language, and peace of mind. Resistance to slavery took many forms, including escaping to freedom in the North. Harriet Tubman risked her life to guide enslaved men, women, and children to freedom through the Underground Railroad, a secret network of black and white people who helped fugitive slaves reach the free states in the North and Canada.

The piece of rope that connects the eight art panels in this book represents the historical lineage of American slavery and its connection to some of the injustices we see happening in the United States today. Slavery was a system of dehumanization and injustice; its legacy is still scattered throughout our daily lives.

... dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed.

—PAUL FREIRE

## The Struggle

BY AJ SANTOS

Being separated  
from your family  
is like dying.

This is slavery.

Not having a mother  
sounds a boom in your head.

Like saying, "Mother you can't stay with me."

This is slavery.

Frederick Douglass writes,  
"I never saw my mother, to know her  
as such, more than four or five times  
in my life."

This is slavery.

A cruel slavemaster  
whips a slave to death.

Slavery is "hardship and suffering."

This is slavery. This is the struggle.

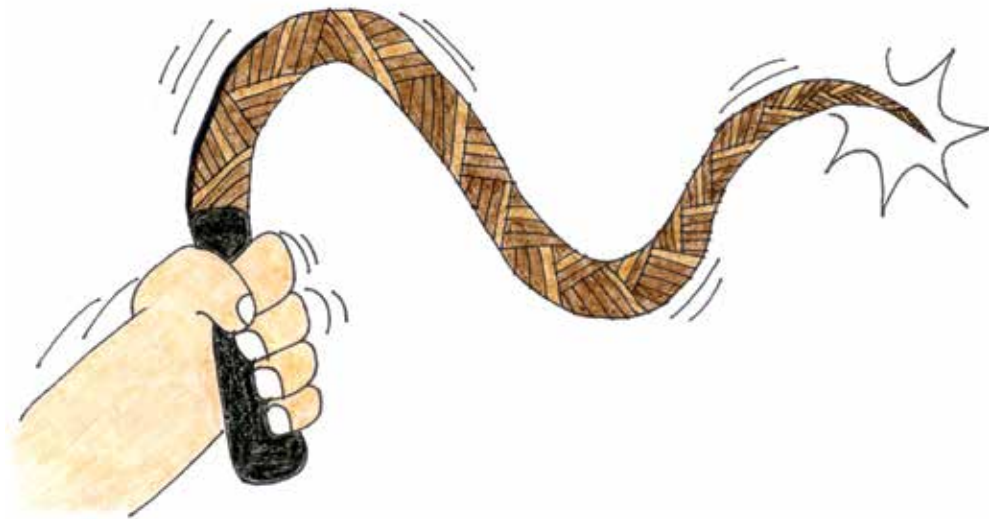
Wounded. Never found.

Slavery was like a horror story.

No pride. No glory.

This is slavery. This is the struggle.

# WHIP



## Meet Henry "Box" Brown

BY KIARA ESCOBAR AND LILIBETH ARIAS

Henry Brown was born in Virginia in 1816. He was raised to be a house slave, running errands and waiting on his master and mistress. His master told the slaves that he was God and that if they obeyed him, he would one day let them free. When he was around seven years of age, Henry's mother told him that their master was not God, but an evil man that could do whatever he pleased with them. Henry soon saw this was true when he turned thirteen. His master was dying and gave Henry to his son, William. Henry had to say goodbye to his mother and go with his new master to Richmond, Virginia to work in a tobacco factory.

After working at the tobacco factory for a few years, Henry met a woman named Nancy. They were friends until that friendship turned to love. They were married with the promise that they would not be sold, but their masters broke their promise and Nancy was sold, along with their three children. Henry was devastated. It became his mission to get his family back and escape to the North.

Henry made a plan to escape with the help of Samuel A. Smith, a white man who thought slaves should be free. Henry would mail himself north to Philadelphia in a box just big enough to fit his body. It was a twenty-seven hour journey! When he got there, William Still, a black abolitionist, sent him to Boston and helped him find out where his family was. He soon found out that his family was sent to North Carolina, and the only way he could get them back was to buy them for \$1,200. This was a huge amount of money that Henry knew he could never afford.

Henry spoke out against slavery. After the Fugitive Slave Act became law, Henry faced the danger of getting captured in the North and being sent back to his former master. To avoid the risk, Henry fled to England. In the end, it was Henry's resistance to letting go of his family, even if he couldn't free them, that led him to freedom. Henry "Box" Brown is famous for mailing himself to freedom in a crate.

## The Bloody Pain

BY JESSICA LOPEZ

He was a cruel man;  
he had a wicked look as he  
whipped upon her naked back  
til she was literally  
covered with blood  
It seemed as if he felt excitement  
with every whip  
he'd give her

SLASH! SLASH!  
the blood-clotted cowskin  
the sound  
as it hit her back

WHIP!  
No words, no tears, no prayers  
from his gory victim  
seemed to move  
his iron heart  
from its bloody purpose

He seemed, at times,  
to take  
great pleasure  
in whipping a slave  
AHHHHH!  
NO!  
PLEASE!  
the louder she screamed  
the harder he whipped



I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs . . . They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains.

—FREDERICK DOUGLASS

# Frederick Douglass 1818-1895

Frederick Douglass, a former slave turned abolitionist, was a prominent figure in our study of black history this year. Frederick Douglass used his powerful personal anecdote to persuade Americans and the world to end slavery. We read his autobiography, explored his early childhood, and discovered the daily struggles of black people caught within the throes of slavery. Douglass wrote about the spirituals he heard while enslaved as a young boy. The spiritual “Amazing Grace” is a meaningful hymn that resonates with Douglass’ struggle. He was once lost and defeated while enslaved, but freed himself from the peril after teaching himself to read and to write. As a class, we were inspired by both the spiritual and by Douglass’s words. We sang our own version of “Amazing Grace,” reciting spoken-word verses from Douglass’s narrative while humming the song’s powerful melody. Using the power of our words and voices, we fought for a statue of Douglass in Roxbury to honor his memory and his struggle. Our voices were heard. Our words made a difference!







Frederick spent a whole night writing passes for his fellow slaves. He wrote the passes so that if anyone asked what they were doing, everyone already had an excuse from their masters to be fishing outside. Frederick was getting more and more restless everyday. He planned the escape.

## Attempt to Escape

From a picture book biography of the early life of Frederick Douglass,

BY LAURA FERNANDEZ

Frederick would spend hours thinking and thinking about the day he would finally get his freedom and liberty. He was restless. He swore not to go another year without attempting to escape.

Frederick spent a whole night writing passes for his fellow slaves. He wrote the passes so that if anyone asked what they were doing at the bay, they could show that they had permission from their masters to be fishing. Frederick was the only one in his group that knew how to read and to write. He was the only one who could write the permissions.

Frederick grew more and more restless every day. He planned the escape for Saturday night.



I stopped resisting in fear. Then I peeked from the left corner of my eyes to see my master letting me loose. Untying the heavy ropes from my abused body. He picks me up and says "You're a man now. a free man. Run. Son. Go before I really hurt you."

## The Fight for Freedom

From a picture book biography of the early life of Frederick Douglass,

BY IDEAL LOBO-MASON

As I fall on the floor of rocks and dirt, my skin tightens and the blood rushes down my leg. The trouble begins, as my master's long silk-threaded whip hits my legs.

I can't take it any longer. As I stand up in immense pain, I grip his throat. My nails puncture his veins. An act of resistance.

My master sighs, his face full of worry. He looks me in the eye with anger. He fights back.

He attempts to tie me up with ropes that bark at me like vicious dogs. I try to pull away. The ropes are longer than the snakes that creep in the forest.

I struggle to free myself from the ropes. I remember the angels in my dreams telling me, "To lose is to win." I calm down.

I stop resisting. Through the corner of my eyes I see my master letting me loose. He unties the heavy ropes from my abused body and says, "You're a man now, a free man. Run, son. Go before I really hurt you."



As Frederick worked day after day, someone came upon him and told him some very bad news. They said that his mom died because she was really sick. Frederick's heart broke into pieces like someone shot an arrow in him. He couldn't even go to the funeral. He hated being a slave.

## Away From Home

From a picture book biography of the early life of Frederick Douglass,

BY ANTWANAI MILLER

Frederick was just a little boy when he was taken from his mom and forced to be a slave. People whispered "Frederick's master is his dad." Frederick didn't know if that was true or not.

Frederick's mom lived 12 miles away. Frederick wanted to see his mom, but he wasn't able to leave. Then, one cold and windy night, Frederick felt a tap on his back. It was his mom!

As the bright sun rose the next morning, Frederick knew it was time for him to start working. Some slaves refused to work, and were beaten with a whip. Sometimes, Frederick was beaten, too.

Days, weeks, and months passed. Frederick wondered about his mom. Why hadn't she come back to see him? When his mom finally came back to visit, Frederick was shocked. She told Frederick she was sorry for not coming sooner. Frederick was just happy that she came.

One day, as Frederick was working, someone gave him some very bad news. His mom had been very sick and died. Frederick's heart broke into pieces like someone had shot an arrow through him. He couldn't even go to his mother's funeral. He hated being a slave.



Dear Mayor Walsh:

After Mario Chiodo was selected to create a statue of Frederick Douglass in the Peace Park that bears his name in Roxbury, it was later announced by the Boston Art Commission that the statute would not be made! Chantel Charles of the Browne Fund was right when she said, "The park is already called Frederick Douglass Peace Park. It's the perfect location [for the statue]. What's stopping us right now is the Art Commission." Why is it so difficult for the Boston Art Commission to say yes? Why would they allow a statue of Bill Russell instead of Martin Luther King, or William Lloyd Garrison instead of Frederick Douglass?

Boston is one of the most historical cities of the U.S; many historic events such as the abolition movement took place in Boston. Who was one of the most important abolitionists to fight for the freedom of slaves? Frederick Douglass! Right here on this very same soil, he gave promising speeches that stirred people to action. I think it's important for people who don't know who he is to finally understand and know what he did.

I didn't know who Frederick Douglass was until the 8th grade. If there were a statue in the Frederick Douglass Peace Park, everyone who walked by would discover who he is and witness Mario Chiodo's beautiful masterpiece. I say we take action and advocate for Frederick Douglass, just like he advocated for freedom!

Sincerely,  
Arianna Rodriguez, 8th Grade  
Conservatory Lab Charter School

cc: Karin Goodfellow, Boston Art Commission  
Ekua Holmes, Boston Art Commission  
Dumas Lafontant, Frederick Douglass  
Selection Committee



February 3, 2016

Dear Mayor Walsh:

On September 16th, 2015, there was an article in the Boston Globe called, "Fight for a Frederick Douglass statue in Roxbury persists." I strongly agreed with the idea of building a statue for Frederick Douglass. That's what brings me to this letter.

Why should there be a statue for Frederick Douglass? There's many reasons, you see. President Lincoln and William Lloyd Garrison are two very important people in history. They both have statues. So what about Douglass? He's just as important. Douglass shows the power of the black community, so it's a perfect idea to create the statue in the Frederick Douglass Peace Garden in Roxbury. Plus, the garden was named after him, so it's a perfect place.

I can personally relate to Frederick Douglass because I'm a person of color and in Douglass' past he was never accepted as a person, just a slave. I haven't gone through what Frederick Douglass suffered, but I also feel I'm not accepted for who I am. What I mean is that the negative images the media creates for blacks will never disappear. It's not like how it used to be, but racism is an ongoing problem that affects our society today.

We need a statue of Frederick Douglass so people of color have a symbol of courage to look back on. Also, if you build this statue more people would know who this great hero was, why he's so important to the black community, and how he had a great cause to end slavery.

Sincerely,  
Kateri Gerald-Burns, Grade 8  
Conservatory Lab Charter School

cc: Karin Goodfellow, Boston Art Commission  
Ekua Holmes, Boston Art Commission  
Dumas Lafontant, Frederick Douglass Selection Committee

## Dorchester students push for Frederick Douglass statue



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

**Conservatory Lab Charter School students Kateri Gerald Burns (left) and Arianna Rodriguez held up signs during their presentation about Frederick Douglass to the Art Commission.**

**By Astead W. Herndon** | GLOBE STAFF APRIL 20, 2016

For seven years, well-connected social activists, art patrons, and community groups have lobbied for a statue to honor famed abolitionist Frederick Douglass, only to be repeatedly rebuffed by the Boston Art Commission.

ARTICLE  
TEXT  
HERE(?)





### Booker T. Washington

The word is writ that he who runs may read,  
What is the passing breath of earthly fame?  
But to snatch glory from the hands of blame—  
That is to be, to live, to strive indeed.  
A poor Virginia cabin gave the seed,  
And from its dark and lowly door there came  
A peer of princes in the world's acclaim,  
A master spirit for the nation's need.

Strong, silent, purposeful beyond his kind,  
The mark of rugged force on brow and lip,  
Straight on he goes, nor turns to look behind  
Where hot the hounds come baying at his hip,  
With one idea foremost in his mind,  
Like the keen prow of some on-forging ship.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.

—W.E.B. DU BOIS

# **Booker T. Washington 1856-1915 W.E.B. Du Bois 1868-1963**

I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed.

—BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington were both influential black leaders in the Jim Crow era marked by racial violence and segregation laws that separated people of color from whites in schools, housing, jobs, buses, restaurants, and other public places. Both men wanted to free blacks from bondage and oppression, but each leader held differing views about how black people should progress. Du Bois believed in the “Talented Tenth” and encouraged black people to pursue academic excellence and to actively reject segregation and fight for their civil rights. Washington, on the other hand, pushed for the path of least resistance and urged blacks to accommodate to white America, to learn a trade, and to progress through hard work. Du Bois’ ideas helped create the foundation for the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 70s.



# ***The Great Migration and the Harlem Renaissance 1915-1970***

Lift every voice and sing,  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the list'ning skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.  
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark  
past has taught us,  
Sing a song full of the hope that the present  
has brought us;  
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

— from *“Lift Every Voice and Sing”*  
BY JAMES WELDON JOHNSON

I pick up my life  
And take it away  
On a one-way ticket—  
Gone up North,  
Gone out West,  
Gone!

— from *“One-Way Ticket”*  
BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Lynchings, segregation, voter restrictions, lack of work that paid a living wage, and fear forced millions of African Americans to make the difficult journey up North to cities such as New York, Detroit, and Chicago between the years 1915 and 1970. The danger, desperation, and fear in the South were so palpable that people were willing to leave all that they knew. This amazing time in history was called The Great Migration. It led the way to profound artistic, literary, and musical expression during the Harlem Renaissance (1917 - 1935).





## The Great Migration North

BY KIARA ESCOBAR

Black men, women, and children. It didn't matter in the South. You so much as looked at a white person the wrong way and you were as good as dead.

For African Americans in the South during the 1900s, daily life was truly a nightmare. Slavery may have ended in 1865, but that didn't mean everything was sunshine and rainbows from that point on. The white Southerners were angry that Blacks were walking freely. So they did everything in their power to put black people back on a leash. One of their tactics was to enact the Black Codes. The Codes deprived Blacks in the South of their new-found freedom by compelling them to work for low wages as laborers and keeping them in constant debt.

Over six million black men, women, and children made the journey North. Poor wages and harsh working conditions, however, were not the main issue propelling the mass migration from South to North. The biggest problem for Blacks was the Ku Klux Klan, a clandestine group of white people that terrorized defenseless black people. African Americans lived in constant fear of being lynched.

African Americans migrated to the North for many reasons, but the main one was that they wanted to escape racial violence and prejudice that pervaded their daily lives. They were also pulled by the better opportunities for well-paid jobs and better schools for their children in northern cities. Yes, there was segregation and racial injustice in the North, but not on the same scale as in the South.

Everything wasn't perfect for Blacks in the North, and things still aren't perfect today. But they came with hope, with heads held high, and forever changed our country.



## “The Harp:” A Song of Hope and Freedom

BY YISAM TIGER LARACUENTE

Augusta Savage, a sculptor who grew up in Green Cove Springs, Florida, was one of the many artists who moved to Harlem, N.Y. during the Great Migration and became part of the Harlem Renaissance. Augusta Savage created sculptures of important African-American freedom fighters such as Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey. Augusta Savage also stood up against racism and made sculptures that represented black people's lives and struggles. She poured her feelings into her sculptures.

Augusta Savage created a powerful sculpture for the 1939 World's Fair in New York called “The Harp.” It was inspired by the song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing” that came to be known as the Black National anthem. The song lyrics were written by Harlem Renaissance poet James Weldon Johnson and set to music by his brother, John Rosamond Johnson. In the sculpture, the 16-foot tall harp is like the hand of God, carrying African-American children to freedom. The children look like they are rising from the harp, singing with joy and pride—facing the future with hope and determination.





We want freedom by any means necessary. We want justice by any means necessary. We want equality by any means necessary.

—MALCOLM X

## ***Malcolm X*** ***1925-1965***

This panel is both a memorial to Malcolm X and a tribute to the Black Panther Party. Malcolm X changed his last name to X to reject his slave name. He worked for the betterment of African Americans and is often compared to Martin Luther King. Dr. King stood for achieving racial justice and equality through non-violence. Malcolm X advocated fighting for civil rights "by any means necessary." Malcolm X was a black nationalist who, unlike King, did not promote integration. Malcolm X laid the foundation for the black power movement of the late 1960s and 1970s.

Malcolm X's ideas had a great influence on the Black Panther Party, which was founded in 1966. The party practiced self-defense to protect blacks from abuse of police power, and instituted programs to aid the black community, such as free breakfast programs for children. They published their own newspaper to inform people about their programs and beliefs.



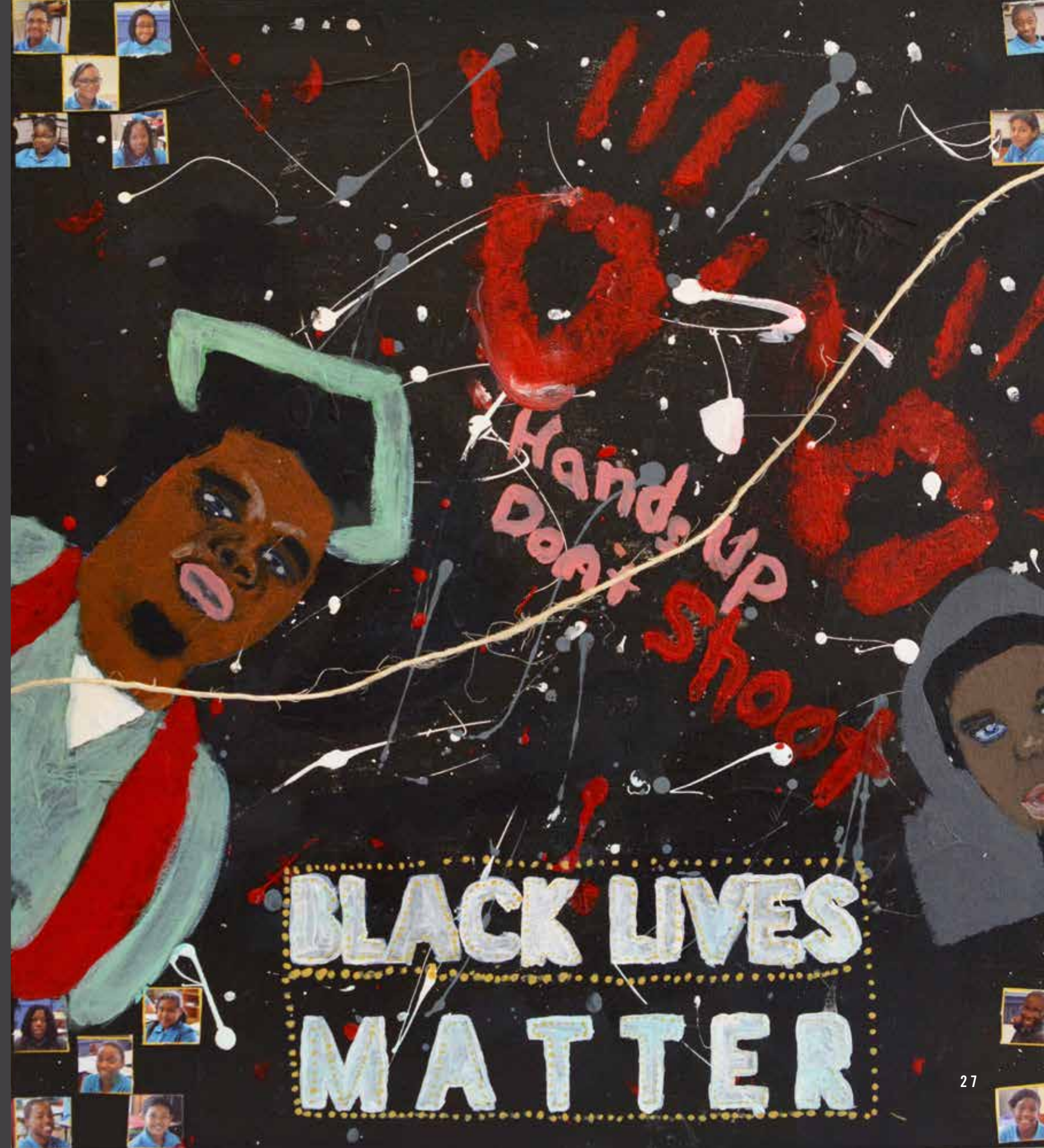
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—MALCOLM X

## ***Black Lives Matter*** **2013 –**

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Do you think that police officer Darren Wilson should or should not have been indicted for the murder of Michael Brown? This “indictment” claim is based on my evaluation of Michael Brown’s autopsy report, the transcript of Darren Wilson’s deposition, and other eyewitness reports.

## Indictment of Darren Wilson

BY MARIEL ROMAN

The Grand Jury in and for the District of Missouri, sitting in Ferguson, charge:

Darren Wilson should be indicted for the murder of Michael Brown because, on the day of the crime, many witnesses were watching the conflict between Michael Brown and Officer Darren Wilson. In the Washington Post, a witness is quoted as saying, “Michael Brown was kind of moving at him like ‘I’m giving up, hands up.’” The witness said he heard Brown shout ‘Ok, Ok, Ok’. This shows that when Brown was putting up his hands, it was as though he was surrendering to Officer Wilson.

Another witness, a young woman walking from the library, also saw the fight between Brown and Wilson and observed, “Brown didn’t get far before he ‘turned around.’ He was moving forward, but it was the motion of a man falling forward. To me it looked like murder.” This indicates that Wilson shot Brown without even hearing what he had to say.

Another witness who said she saw the whole thing concluded that Wilson murdered Brown. Testifying before the Grand Jury, a detective relayed what he had been told by the witness. “I’ll describe it as palms up with his hands and fingers roughly at shoulder height, elbows not touching his rib cage, but elbows at a natural fall.” We can infer that Brown’s hands were up, meaning he was surrendering to Wilson.

All of these witnesses say they saw Michael Brown giving up and surrendering to Wilson, but that Wilson still fired several gunshots at Brown. This case should therefore be considered murder, and Wilson should be indicted.

**Comparisons of injustice in the judicial court system**  
 One of these individuals is a fictional character.  
 The other one is a real murder case that occurred in 1955.

**TOM ROBINSON**

**Strengths:**  
Practical, hopeful, compassionate, good husband + father

**Weaknesses:**  
We never get to know him well enough to see any weaknesses.

Racism  
Violence  
Bringing Up Children  
Good and Evil  
Courage  
Inhumanity

Prejudice and Bigotry  
Compassion and Understanding  
Gender  
Justice  
Innocence to Experience  
Social Class  
Heroism

Education  
Stereotyping  
Loneliness

**Tom Robinson**

- fiction
- 1935
- only felt sorry for Mayella Ewell (did not commit a crime)
- mis-reading of facts
- physically incapable of the crime

**Emmett Till**

- fact
- 1955
- did assault woman (whistled and touched woman's hand)
- adolescent-driven joke
- jury knew they were convicting the wrong man but still bragged about it

**Emmett Till**

• Real life case where two white men were brought to trial for murdering 14-year-old Emmett Till. They are declared innocent.

By Yisam “Tiger” Laracuentre



Injustice anywhere is a threat to  
justice everywhere.

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## Super Bowl 50 Controversy

BY YISAM TIGER LARACUENTE

It was an opportune time for Beyoncé to support the Black Lives Matter Movement at the Super Bowl this year. In my opinion, Beyoncé made a great choice to inspire millions of fans to help the cause and join her in the fight to end discrimination, racism, and prejudice. She used her popularity as a celebrity to further the Black Lives Matter cause and announce that her husband Jay-Z, pledged to donate 1.5 million dollars to the movement.

I believe that Beyoncé’s creative and strategic decision to depict the symbol of the once notorious Black Panther Party draws attention to a matter that needs national and international attention. Beyoncé made her fans aware of how the Black Panther Party of the past relates to the Black Lives Matter Movement of today.

Beyoncé’s influential image has the capacity to attract and motivate a strong following to persuade the government to enforce equal and fair treatment and to hold law enforcement accountable for the unlawful murders of African-American men.

Some may call the renowned rap recording artist Jay-Z’s pledge to donate 1.5 million dollars to the Black Lives Matter Movement an inappropriate “publicity stunt.” However, artists like Kid Rock and Pantera openly use the confederate flag on stage and on their clothing. The confederate flag is widely known to be a symbol of racism. Their provocative use of a symbol of racial hatred was never made into a controversy. I support artists like Beyoncé who use their fame and popularity to support justice, fair and equal treatment, and the enforcement of our Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment. Like Martin Luther King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

## “Hate”

BY QUINTIN BAYAS

They hate me because if you’re brown they hate you,  
They hate my skin,  
they try to box me in;  
into categories that I can’t relate to.

I’m courteous  
Not a criminal,  
Keep conflict to a minimal  
I’m far from murderous.

They follow me around any store,  
Like I’ve stolen from them before;  
But I don’t let it affect me,  
They don’t have to like me, as long as they **respect me**.

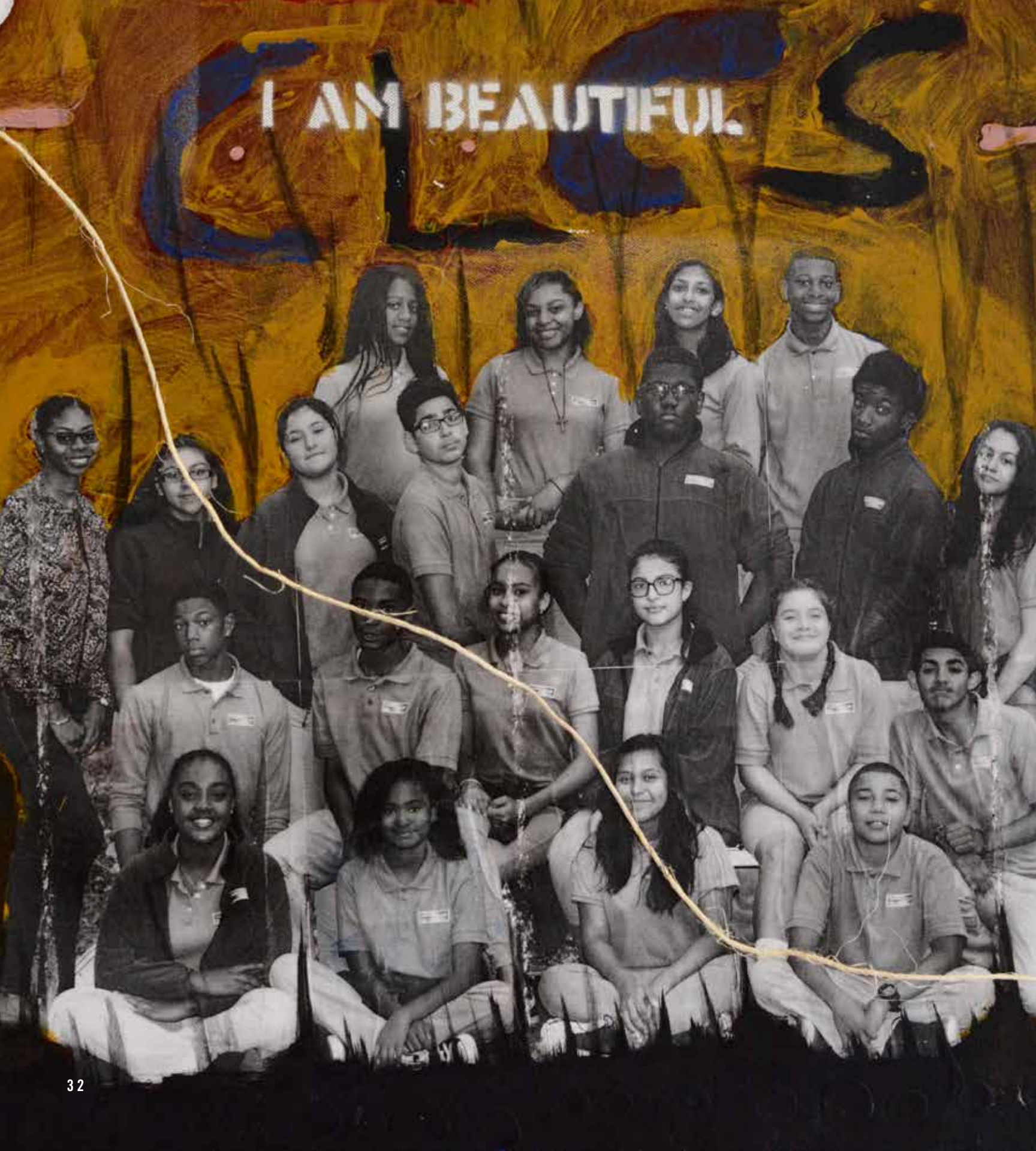
## Don’t Dehumanize Me

BY JAHSIAH MONTISSOL

The word “nigger” is dehumanizing, so is the word “nigga.” I don’t even think it’s appropriate when people say, “What’s up, my nigga?” That phrase demonstrates ownership in a way that’s not right. These words are not scientifically accurate. I am a human. I am a human regardless of my skin color. When we see an animal with a bushy tail and red or silver fur that looks a little bit like a dog, we call the animal a “fox,” regardless of its color. When we see a man, woman, or child, we call those individuals “human beings.”

The n-word should be universally hated and despised. No one in the world is a nigger/nigga. No one in the world should be called a nigger/nigga. Human beings cannot own each other. When you use nigger/nigga, you are saying you own that person—that they are less human than you.





I AM BEAUTIFUL

[The Black Doll experiment conducted by Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark in the 1940s] was groundbreaking in that it sort of changed the way we look at race relations. Here are kids who felt that [...] being white was more beautiful than black. And that's pretty devastating.

—WILLIAM-JULIUS WILSON, PROFESSOR, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

## *I Am Beautiful*

This panel represents us as a class. We are all children of color and we are beautiful, each in our own unique way. This year, we were free to learn about a piece of history that is rarely taught. We learned about people who look like us. We have taken all that we have discussed this year and allowed it to embolden us as we move on to high school. We are who we are, and we would never want to change that. We are beautiful; we are Conservatory Lab Charter School.

I think colorism exists today like it did years ago and generations ago . . . I think the only thing that's a solution is conversation. I think the only thing that is a solution is pointing out here is a trap you're falling into that has been set for you, that has been set over history. And let's go back and take a look at what's happening in front of you so that you don't fall into this trap.

—SOLEDAD O'BRIEN, BROADCASTER



## I'm beautiful

BY AJ SANTOS

I'm beautiful  
because I go to school to get an education and get out of the hood.  
I'm beautiful  
because I work hard. When it comes to sports, I never give up.  
I'm blessed  
for being the kind of kid I am today. I'm from a place of violence and robbery.  
I'm appealing  
for being Cape Verdean and for having a beautiful mom.  
I'm magnificent  
'cause I'm creative with my music. I like different genres.  
I'm dazzling  
for being a role model to younger kids.  
I'm sensitive,  
for having different kinds of emotions.  
I'm classy,  
for wearing only Ralph Lauren, 'cause that's what I wore when I was a baby.  
I'm marvelous  
Because I have dreams, and nothing is going to stop me.  
I'm beautiful.



## As Long As I Think I'm Beautiful

BY ANTHONY VEGA

I am beautiful.  
I am a loving and caring person.  
I am Hispanic.  
I am proud of my race.  
I am proud of who I am.  
I work hard to get things done.  
I don't care if I'm beautiful or not.  
As long as I think I'm beautiful,  
I AM BEAUTIFUL!



## Culture

BY JELITZA ROMERO

Dominicans can be loud  
but we are proud.  
People think that we are good,  
because of our traditional tasty food.

But food is not the only thing  
we are well known for.  
Our music expresses our culture,  
Our music is like different tastes of spices and sweets.

Our flag is the most important symbol of our country.  
Blue for Liberty  
Red for the blood of the heroes  
White for salvation.  
In the middle, a coat of arms featuring a shield  
"Dios, Patria, Libertad"  
God, Fatherland, and Liberty.

In America,  
We are judged because of our skin color  
Once they see our flag,  
state police stop us as we ride in cars.  
They make a fake excuse  
They think negatively about us.  
What's so bad, I ask,  
about having a dark or medium skin color?

Dominican Republic is beautiful country with amazing people.  
No matter what our skin color, we are all the same.  
"Don't judge a book by its cover,"  
Don't judge a person by his or her skin color  
We are a COMMUNITY.



## "Gringa"

BY KELSEY SANDOVAL

My pale white skin,  
My golden blond hair,  
My dark hazel eyes,  
My clear english,  
The new name "Gringa."

I envy the Latinos beautiful and caramel skin  
Their dark hair,  
I envy their nicely toned bodies.  
I walk down any street, I hear the word  
"Gringa" echo in my ear.

When I hear the beautiful rhythm of punta,  
My heart starts pumping to the beat.  
The delicious smell of black beans,  
Scrambled eggs with tortillas make my tastebuds tingle,  
My Honduran and Guatemalan heritage makes  
Me grateful and proud.

"Que bonita la gringa," I hear  
I try not to turn red in my cheeks  
Showing shame.  
The reality is I'm 110% Latina  
A proud Latina.





## Born to Sing

BY WINY RODRIGUEZ

I love to sing.  
Singing is my passion and my joy.  
I started singing at the age of two.  
I was born to sing.

I sing because my family loves music.  
My parents have been singing together for twenty-nine years.  
When my younger sister and I sing together,  
We harmonize.

When I sing,  
I express the way I feel inside.  
I become powerful.  
I was born to sing.

## Basketball

BY TRAYVON RICKS

Time's still ticking as I dribble down the court  
Did I forget to mention that it's my favorite sport  
The whole crowd jumping, I guess I got support  
I'm about to take flight, better have a passport

BANG!! I can dunk but I'm only 5' 10"  
My legs have springs, just like I'm a pen  
Everybody says do it again and again  
Now I have highlights on E.S.P.N.

4th quarter with 1 minute on the clock  
Killer crossover made a body drop  
I thought I was Steph Curry with the shot  
It's up . . . SPLASH!!



# I Am Beautiful...



I am strong.  
ANTWANAI MILLER



I am blessed.  
ARIANNA RODRIGUEZ

## Missing



I am resilient.  
CHRISTOPHER HENRIQUEZ



I am a people person.  
IDEAL LOBO-MASON

I have the power to choose my own fate.  
JAHSHIAH MONTISSOL



I am passionate about what I do.  
JESSICA LOPEZ



I am unique.  
KATERI GERALD-BURNS



# *I Am Beautiful...*



I am both kind and caring.

**KIARA ESCOBAR**



I am myself and I don't let other people interfere with that.

**LAURA FERNANDEZ**



I am intelligent.

**LILIBETH ARIAS**



I am kind, sporty, quiet, and myself.

**MARIEL ROMAN**



I am polite and chill.

**QUINTIN BAYAS**



I'm independent and determined.

**TIGER LARACUENTE**



I'm beautiful because of the milk chocolate skin that I am in.

**SHANA PINNOK**

# *Thank you!*



Ms. Patilla, our persevering teacher, for guiding us on this journey through history.

Salvador Jiménez Flores, teaching artist, for helping us paint the panels in this book. Your artwork, and all the thought you put into it, inspired us to put a lot of thought into our own artwork.



Ms. Jackson, for being a second mom to us. Your photos of us are memories trapped in an infinity.

Ms. Berkower, for editing our book, helping with our projects, and bringing us books that speak to who we are.

Ms. Pretlow, for coaching us and giving us confidence.



Astead W. Herndon, Globe reporter, for inviting us to tour the Boston Globe, for interviewing us and for writing an article about our efforts to get a statue of Frederick Douglass in Roxbury. It was exciting to see our school represented in the Boston Globe!



Ekuia Holmes and Karin Goodfellow, for inviting us to present at the Boston Art Commission. It was exciting to know that people of higher power are eager to listen to and hear our opinions.

Dumas Lafontant, from the Friends of Frederick Douglass, for taking the time to share your philosophy with us and to talk about the people who inspired you to get to where you are now. You definitely inspired us. A special thanks for giving us the opportunity to exhibit our work at the Z Gallery in Roxbury.