

HUNTING FOR MY FUTURE

*Poems from the youth at
Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center*

an Arts Corps writing program

2016-2017

Spruce Street

Located in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle, Spruce Street Inn provides safe residential services for at-risk youth who are in crisis. The center offers services for up to 18 youth in coordination with Washington State's Division of Children and Family Services and the office of homeless youth within the Washington State Department of Commerce. Spruce Street is one of a few select programs in Seattle that provides services to "street youth", chronic runaways, and commercially sexually exploited children.

Arts Corps

Arts Corps provides a network of arts learning opportunities throughout the region through long-standing partnerships with elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as community centers and residential sites to deliver out-of-school arts programming. Our out-of-school arts program places teaching artists at partner sites for after-school classes in a specific art form.

Typically, out-of-school arts classes are offered once or twice a week, for 1-2 hours per class, for eight weeks and are taught by excellent, community-based teaching artists who specialize in many different art forms and cultural expressions.

Meredith Arena

Meredith is a writer and teaching artist from New York City. She teaches theater arts, writing and media arts and enjoys the places where these overlap. For eight years, she was a teaching artist in the Arts & Literacy after school program in Brooklyn, where she regularly organized large-scale art projects with children. At the Interdependence Project in NYC, she facilitated weekly meditation and writing groups. In Seattle, she spent three years working with youth experiencing homelessness. Her work with youth cultivates compassion, joy and critical thinking.

Ludin Mejia

Classroom Assistant

Ludin Mejia Vasquez was born in Guatemala but moved to the United States in 2000. They are now a Seattle base QTPOC artist using art as a form of story telling

Bye childhood, or at least what I thought was you.

-DW

When I look in the mirror, I see a troubled girl that is crying for love and attention. I see the girl who helps the people around her and worries about them, but doesn't do the same. I see the girl who wants to change so much, but won't for an odd reason. I see the girl who always runs, but looks back.

-Anonymous

I don't trust mothers
after being abandoned

I don't trust fathers
after being beaten

I don't trust cops
they want for me to fall

I don't trust myself
with alcohol.

I don't trust men
with their strange appetites.

I don't trust women
with their knack to start fights.

I don't trust society
they only want gold and jewels.

I only trust the universe
she's the only one with a brain
she justifies all the pain

-Arcadia

This sullen reality holds high in reserve. In the nocturnal hours from lows we learn. Vibrations are connected; love and hate are reflected. We may feel far away but this universe has a way to bring Pluto closer and closer after years of solitude

-Arcadia

Collaborative Poem 4/18/17

A car parked on the side of the street in the rain
I'm sitting in the car
on my way to the wedding
listening to the rain drops
locked in a dark cell
field of dandelions
wishing I could be as free as the seeds adrift
as free as the blue heron on my grandmother's deck
I want to push through the swinging doors
and take my first breath.

4/18/17

-Jossie, Nicolas, Taylor, Adi, Moses, Meredith and Ludin

Wishes

1.to be taller because I don't like to be short

2.to be able to speak every language in the world fluently because that would be really cool

3.to be able to live with my brother and me and him could always be together because we haven't been together in 3 years

-Ashton

We belong to no one
that's what everyone says
but that's not what happens
why can't we be us, why
can't I be me
- Alyssa

What's left when you
cut me down
What's left when I
Bleed to death
What's left when you
take everything I have,
everything I live for
What's left
- Alyssa

If you really knew me
you would know-
you already know me-
I like to jump around
and play basketball and
be active.

Things are important to me.
People who matter to me:

Mom
my best friend

I wish I could be home.
My favorite memories are with my mom and best friend.
I like to look good.
My favorite colors are red and black

and white.

I hate my teacher because
my teacher hates me.

- Myshaun

truth

“Stay in your lane”

They might say.

“If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say
anything at all.”

They might add.

But no.

But that’s not the truth

the truth is not nice.

Nor is it mean

it is only honest.

-addy

I was...

I was raised from the land of no life.

all trees barren.

all grass singed.

I was born from a miracle.

My mother said she needed a girl.

She finally got one

6 pounds 3 ounces

a cold winter day in the rough tundra.

Bit by the cold.

never cried.

hit by the hand.

Never dies.

5 hours away from the rainy city
the city where I would face a while new kind of despair.
A despair deeper than the cuts
deeper than the lies
deeper than the pain in my eyes.
I am lost in the city of new life.

-addy

A situation I would like to change and what it would look like....

A situation I would like to change is letting Mr. Cheetah puff get away with his racist allegations & the things he is doing that is making people, especially immigrants feel unwelcomed after all the U.S. is made up of immigrants we are one nation of diversity & he is ruining it.

People wouldn't be scared. Diversity would be like slogan for the U.S. Also, I would lift all the ridiculous bans that trump has placed. I would make the immigrants and immigration a strength.

- Kameah

People- People come & go, but some stay.

Emotions-emotions are uncontrollable, you can not want them but have them anyways. Emotions can change the way you view things, how you decide things. People can bring up emotions you didn't even know you had. Emotion is powerful. Emotion can make you change for better or for worse. The key is not to let your emotions control you, you control your emotions.

Generations – The technological advances over the generations have been incredible. The generation of people evolving too. This generation your looks are more important that your brain or personality. This generation is filled with judgment and recklessness.

- Kameah

change
different
unique
weird
fun
likeable
popularity
appearance
judgement
unfairness
looks
pressure
society
damaged
corrupt
rearrangement
movement
unify

-Kameah

Doves are like cotton.

- Xazavier

A man without sauce
is lost, but the same man
can be lost in the sauce.

- Xazavier

Like an Eagle
I am an Eagle
I see far into the future.
The world is not fair.
I have no choice but to hunt.

Hunting is my future, my life.
I stand up strong for what I believe in.
seeing, searching and hunting is what I do.
I hunt for my future.
A better future.
seeing, believe it, and making
it happen.
- Anonymous

Yeah he's black, but he's my EQUAL
Yeah he's Mexican, but we're the SAME
Yeah he's Asian, but we're one TOGETHER
WE ARE EQUAL
-Rich

People treat me differently because
I'm black. They beat me and make me do chores.
-Anonymous

The Bug

A bug runs for its life, it is being hunted down. Smoke comes out of nowhere. The bug is no longer able to run for its life and dies almost immediately. The body of our bug turns out to be a beetle. The beetle, along with others is treated to stay hard and not rot. At last after being put inside of plastic, to become a keychain. Oh my beautiful keychain. I love it.

- Iris

White and hairy I am.
Cute but fearless.
Be careful with my teeth.
I have very good ears, pointy they are.
Don't mistake me with a cat.

Good sense of smell I have.
My nose is often wet.
Known for tracking skills I am.
Run, Run, Run, and if you can fly,
try to get away, but know I'm a hunter
A professional hunter who knows
what it's doing, so give up my prey
make it easier for both of us.
I have four legs and run fast.
I'll catch up fast and despite
if you beg
I'll murder you for dinner.
Birds say to you that you might get away
if you fly up into the sky fast
enough. But think of me having
two very strong hind legs
so I might leap up and catch you anyway.
I am the wolf
who howls
at the
moon.
-Iris

My Dog Named Joey

Little alleyway between the houses
made me feel small as a mouse
stepped on it and killed it

don't know why, but I still did it
very sad
scary bad.
Hill at the end of the lawn
chill in the head at dawn.
I heard her barking
I can't stop farting
I found her dead
but just her head
eaten away at the torso
it was like a horror show.
- Angel

Ode to School
Oh school
You are amazing
you are fascinating
Oh school
Your students are fun
It's not just one, it's a ton.
Oh school
You lunchtables are circular
They all look familiar
Oh school
You make me forget about stress at home.
I wished I lived in Rome.
Oh school
There's nowhere else I wanna be
Can't you see?
-Anonymous

Don't frustrate yourself for your faults
Your power is within
I've ran and ran to and fro,
One piece of advice,
Don't let loved ones go

For the fire of passion burns hot when you find yourself in a comfey spot.

So grow and soar

Open a door

New worlds arise when you keep your eyes on your prize

Forgive and learn but love must burn

-Christian

Hey Dom what's up? How's it going? Its Jesse. I'm sorry for my unknown where about, but when I was walking back to Marysville, I got lost and didn't know where Mac's house was and I went into this Little Casers and asked an employee where the park was, and she gave me a ride and took me to different parks, but I forgot what the park had looked like and so she found out I was homeless and took me to Walmart and bought me a bunch of shit like a backpack and food and shit then well she wouldn't let me sleep outside so she called the cops on me and they took me to Spruce Street. Yea I'm in Seattle. I'm sorry I didn't get to thank you for everything for being one of my closest friends. idk how, but I've only known you for only a month and it feels like I've known you for years. Thank you for the best weekend of my life. Thank you and Mac for all the weed that we smoked together. Thank you for talking to me in that shit hole. Cedar house, you were my only friend in there. Thank you Dominic for everything. I wish you nothing but good hopes for you. I love you man. I want you to know that.... Good-bye and good luck my friend.

Your friend, Jesse.
Peace out blood.

Atalya,

We had so many happy times, so many memories. I remember all those nights you stayed up all night to make sure the three of us were safe and fed. All those funny times we met people and different moments. You mean so much to me. I love you so much and you will always be my home girl. I remember the first night when we got scared over the helicopter. Man, it was hella funny.

-Macy

I've lost everything in my life. I'm all
by myself in this world. No one to look up to
and no one to love. May god bless my soul
so I can rest easy.

-Anonymous

Ode to Vicious mom

You were cruel

You were abusive

When I needed you, you just drifted away.

Maybe you weren't ready

I hate that you are what is hurting me now

I hate that you always put Someone before me

but I hate more that I still care about you

-Vicky

I feel trapped...like love lies within me, but can't be let free. The dark skies call my name at night and I finally feel faith within me the life I live is of darkness and peace inside, but lust within.

-Macy

Oblivion leads to peace of the mind

embrace it.

-Travis

amnesia settling over like amethyst

mist erasing the system that makes it seem necessary to function. evading all purpose...

-Travis

You couldn't love me

you couldn't feel

now that you let me

it feels so surreal

since you have left

me

I know how it builds,
since you have left

me

I know how it feels

I know empty sadness

but how is it real

-Danial

why be surprised red oblivion which leads to black death and gray dissolve because blue
stupidity in a golden paradox

long stupidity leads to sheer luck

-Shadowstep

Ashes to ashes

dust to dust

a man once told me

not to trust

ashes to ashes

dust to dust

a woman once told me

not to cuss

the things that they

taught me

to know avail

sadly I'm still

stubborn as hell.

-Danial

“Snow”

Snow. Beautiful, white, glimmering snow.

You may be cold and wet but, I still love you. I’m so sad that we only see each other a few times a year. I wish we could see each other so much more.

-Jo Jo

“Family”

I do have a family but they just don’t love me. I do not miss or love them anymore. My life has been very sad, evil, and cruel but I hope one day it will be happy again one day in the future.

-Jo Jo

My Siblings

One thing that’s most important is my siblings.

They are all very funny and outgoing. They never fail to make you smile.

-Nessia

5/17/17

I learned gratitude when I was falling this person was always there to catch me.

I learned forgiveness when I did a bad thing and they said “It’s okay, I forgive you. Let’s put this moment behind us and keep going forward. “

I was shown kindness when I was all alone in the dark and then they came and showed what life was like when everything was bright. The brightness they showed me was love, fun, forgiveness, laughter, hugs, kisses, the sun, and not hatred, cruelty, evil, or hellish.

In the future, I hope that I won’t feel like I’m drowning or falling and that I feel love and laughter.

-Jo Jo

If family is everything, then why do I see mine as enemies? If I'm supported, why do I feel cornered? Family tells me to give up. I think I should cause I ain't got no luck. My father is locked up. I cry myself to sleep while people tell me to shut up. I hit this blunt to ignore the fact that I'm fucked up.

-William

Deep Insight

After Amy Gerstler

“Don't get sentimental about your discarded skins.” Just remember everybody sins.

Move fast stay sharp, just know there is light where there is dark.

Friends come, friends go stay focused on self-growth.

Live long, live well. As you pass you'll know you did swell.

Satan does tempt, when you fall look to the savior and repent.

Family is beautiful. Just know family can also be cruel.

Find love and bathe in it, create new life and cherish it.

- William

I awoke in my cave of slumber. I looked to my left and noticed my mate, my kin, Kotes. I wake him. I noticed my offspring-kin, my children, sleeping soundly and contentedly. There was Shadow, he was the eldest, and in his adolescence stage of growth, his peak of development. There was Winter, the second youngest. This silver and white young wolf was full of boundless energy. Shadow was all midnight black with spikes of red and red bangs. Finally, there was Lily Rose, the youngest and most fragile. She almost hadn't survived her first winter. Fortunately, Kotes and I saw to it that she received the extra love and support and attention she needed. She was a golden wolf, with a misty aura. Dakota and I saw potential in this sweet young cub.

I went out to hunt for my pack, my family. Kotes usually protected our cubs while I gathered nourishment. I smelled a deer. Oh, one thing you should know, I show the fullest of respect to my prey. And I would never kill a harmless innocent child, nor leave one motherless. I, as a

huntress, have integrity and love for all things living, and hunt for nourishment rather than pleasure, as sustenance for my young. I sniffed out a buck. I was ready to dive in for the kill. Teeth bared, claws digging into the dirt, ready to pounce when ALL OF THE SUDDEN, I noticed a shadow looming over me. I felt my fur on the back of my neck stand on edge... I slowly turned around, only to see.... A GRIZZLY! Before I had a chance to run or even cry out for help, it swung its massive claw, almost twice as big as my head, knocking me into the nearest rock, blood splaying. I released a howl of agonized pain, crying out for help, before the inevitable death embrace.

-Aria

5 second poetry

And I looked into the window of her soul and said

“bitch”

-TJ

Trapped!!!

Have you ever felt like you can't be you? Well that's how I feel all the time. I feel like water that's trapped in a tank. I'm supposed to be more than this. I don't just want to be stuck. I want to feel free. But I'm afraid that the real me will be judged and mocked. They say the world has changed and that it will except me, but not everyone will. People will not look at me and say I'm normal, and I know I'm not normal I'm different and I don't mind that. I like being different.

-Anonymous

Dear Roni,

If I made a wish, do you think it would come true? I would wish upon a star because I'm missing you. I wish that I could turn back time even if only to say goodbye. Now I watch as time passes me by.

– Maya

Dear Rayna,

You were always so good to me, but never was I good to you. No matter what I still love you best friend till the end of forever.

- Maya

I am like a single cloud, slowly watching as I drift away from you. The sun and clouds disappear into nothingness –

I am like a toddler. Tumbling through the streets lonely. Suddenly there is a puddle in front of me, a road block. I trip, falling, it's deeper than it should be. Drowning. in pain, grief, desperation, sorrow. I see the moon and it reminds me of you. I see the stars and they remind me of them. My life is like a landslide. Destruction, storms, loneliness.

I long for a place to call home.

My home is like my heaven.

I see the sunrise, another day of desperation longing for a home.

-Kaylee

The Apples
Me,
I think,
write,
and draw my
LIFE
loss of
feelings towards
myself, they're no
longer inside
ME
-Brisen

As Cicel looked into the sky he saw a cloud that reminded him of the friend he missed so much. Cicel lowered his head in sadness and longing.

Cicel looks through the grass and sees a strange metallic figure and realizes he is in grave danger. He roars for his pack to be warned.

He hadn't seen a figure like this for a long time, but he still knew what it was.

There is a quiet bang and Cicel doesn't have enough time to react.

He feels a pain a horrible deadly pain in his chest, his pack was in the distance but could see the horrible and evil face of the dentist taking a selfie with their beloved friends corpse, the human smelled proud and scared.

The pack looks in horror at the corpse of the friend they had loved and at the monster who had just murdered him in cold blood.

Some time later, Cicel was looking upon the Cincinnati zoo gorilla enclosure and knew and saw that they were on the precipice of disaster.

There was a small immature child wanting to take a closer look at the beautiful Harambe. No one could stop the disaster that was waiting for them.

The child falls into the enclosure and people start to scream.

Harambe grabs the child and runs around trying to get the child away from the dangerous screaming humans above.

As people started to scream Harambe noticed that he needed to save this child from the screaming humans, but he couldn't save the child from the clutches of his parents' fear.

Harambe couldn't have known that Cicel would be welcoming him in the next couple minutes.

Bang!

Harambe looked to the sky and thought "I'm coming Cicel"

-Anonymous

As I open my eyes, I look up to see 3 little boys and their mom pointing and smiling at me. As I get to my feet I hear a loud bang behind me I turn and bare my teeth in the direction of the noise as I see this big looking man with a bucket of meat. As soon as the smell hits my nose I run as fast as possible to get some food before my brother smells it, but then I remember it's still a bit scary to think that just 3 days ago my brother had gotten sick and died. I could hardly stop my sadness turning into anger I started to growl at him, but before I could close my mouth I had a gun pointing at me. I was so scared that I couldn't do anything I wanted to run and hide but my

anger wouldn't let me so I just stood there in shock as I watched the bullet spin straight for my stomach as it broke through my thick coat and skin, I heard a roar I was shocked to find that it came from me. I heard a thud and felt my body hitting the grassy but hard earth and as I looked up, I saw the face behind the gun smiling as he watched me bleed and roar. The last thing I remember from that night is waking up to see my body lying motionless against the hard, cold ground with blood staining my dark black stripes.

-Anonymous

HOME
FUTURE
FEAR
FOREVER
HOME
PERMANENT
DISTANCE
HOME
SEPERATE
HOME
DISBELIEF
DROWNING
OVERWHELM
OVERWHELMING
OVERWHELMING
OVERWHELMING

-Anonymous

Dance

Dance dance, as my dress flows in the fresh air. I feel the beat in my soul I move my feet quickly and fast. I see color all round me. As I feel the beat, my heart starts I start to cry and I start to feel free.

-KZ

PBJF

I will smile at them
I will walk that extra mile for them
I will say that I'm fine
and every night I will dine
but every day I will die
just a little inside
I need a place with familiarity
a place to get clarity,
where I dare to be me
And that's in your arms
there are no alarms
Get up, get out, stay gone till night
But here I'm held tight
no need to fight to stay alive
I can just dive right into your life
And we can continue where we left off
no tops, just skin and we can begin
The door is locked your mom will
just knock so we better be fast,
oh, she took the dogs for a walk.
Our bodies have clashed, our lips
are smashed together. We have no
limit but vex is the key, so you'll
never hurt me. 3 hours
passed, we were everything but
chast-aye and she's home
time to play a round of melee.
-Anonymous

Untitled

There was a box. It was empty and alone and didn't have a home. The box was on the forest floor and was approached by a whore. She picked up the box, for it reminded her of herself and her imagining wealth. She then sat down with the box in her hands as she sat in the sand. She saw a rock and put it in the box. She took off her socks and put them in the box. She then met a fox and put it in the box. She sat the box down and walked away, for on this day, she was no longer empty alone. She had found a home. -ThuMaii

The Rainbow Necklace

The rainbow necklace was made in a factory and then sold at Gay Pride to a young boy named Jim and he kept this necklace in his pocket for four years to remind him that it is OK to be who you are. But one he found that he had misplaced the necklace and it was gone so he looked in the laundry and in the couch and even the fish tank but it was still gone, so he wept and wept for one week until he got a knock on the door and there was a weird man, about the same age. The man asked why Jim was crying. Jim replied, "I lost something close to me." The man asked what it looked like so he could help and he said it was very poorly made and the man asked if he had lost it in the hallway. Jim said, "I don't know, but I have no idea if I will be able to be myself without it and all of the sudden, the man leans over and puts something in his pocket and whispered in his ear. "Be careful with it next time." Jim grabbed him by the arm and said, "I need to do something for you." "Well I could use a drink," said Jim, so they both went to the local pub and drank and laughed and sang for the rest of their lives together, forever.

-Anonymous

Personal Growth

With no one to aspire to
and no one to lean on,
I created my own path,
free of hatred and con.
A stretched out journey
with no simple short cuts.
I soon realized every experience
is an opportunity for learning.

-Arcadia

Ode to Life

Like a dream seems longer than a shooting star dying away, there are many more to come. Many more expected versions. Sometimes it seems you can't do anything, that life is living you. Other times you realize that your true power and become wildly alive.

-Arcadia

Who am I?

Someone with a rough beginning, hoping for a happy ending.

Someone learning to evolve with every experience.

Someone putting emotions on reserve due to past teachings.

Someone with a cast view of the beauty of being.

-Arcadia

Roses are red, violets are blue. I love your smile, so keep smiling no matter what someone says.

-Christina

Roses are red.

Violets are blue.

I really like your eyes.

-Bren

13 years gone bye and shit, I'm growing up. I got to stop and ask myself how you holding up? Cuz shit is crazy man, cuz how does everyone have it all figured out as I sit and pout. This shit so depressing and God I pray you guide me. No I don't know what to do. My grandma tells me, "Go back. You're wasting all your time." I try to pay no mind, but I got to draw the line and my loved ones are growing old and it makes me cry cuz I done lost so many people in life and I'm tired of letting go even if its life, I just want them all to know, I never meant to cause you any pain. Cuz fuck the haters. My brotha, you wanna dare try to forget my name. Fuck my past. Fuck the ones that made me feel like nothing. When you needed help, I'm the one who always fucking came. I'm the one who picked you up when you stuck in the rain. I'm the one who helped you out when you was in such pain. You remember that bullshit, you said you never snitch on me, but them you leave me in the street?

-Mari

I came from the Hoods of Grand Praire Texas.

I grew up with a bad mother and a father nowhere to be found.

And like every other stereotypical chino kid, every kid around me bullied the fuck outta me. I've been beaten, pushed, kicked and spit on and now I smoke weed and drink and pop pills just to feel stringer and forget about the times my mother called the cops on me for nothing. The times she yelled and bullied me, and all the times she threw me away like a piece of shit. All I've got to say is "fuck you Mom. Fuck you!"

-Jesse

Ode to Cats

Claws scratching against the couch arms

Meows breaking through the midnight silence

Such precious creations made on street corners in cardboard boxes

Pounds full of fur balls and crying children who are not even that

 Taken home are few

Left to die are many

Safety is but a dream like tuna on a plate of catnip

Soft laps and fresh water is a fantasy for many stilled hearts

Help create homes for such beautiful things

Love is all they desire.

-SH

Ode to the Bed of the Moon and the Friend of the Sea

As I walk by the seashore, I look up and smile as I see the moon surrounded by darkness and specks of stars the ocean reflects it, making a rainbow of blues and whites.

-AS

The Ode of White

As I stand there in the cold, little specks of white falling from the sky that covered with white clouds that make white specks that are different each time. Some square, some oval and some even triangles. The specks are snow.

-OCH

Sometimes I'm seriously wonderin' ..the fuck is love? I know I'm only 14 n' got my whole life ahead of me. But if I can't change, why try? I'm self-absorbed, I hurt all my family. My loved ones, my friends and even the shadiest. God Damn, why care? Why attempt to fix the most broke? I tried. They died. All on the inside. Fuck this. Fuck that. Fuck my life. Hey, you too! I don't give on single shit about you.

-Ashton

Door

"Door" repeated,
again and again.
The different
rooms separate.
Locked, approval
needed. "Door,"
they say."Lock,"
they think.

-Ashton

Let me Save You

I want to give you my all. But the weight of my love might make you fall. So give me the hand that isn't hanging onto the edge of the cliff. So please.

Let me save you.

-Ashton

Paper helps me think. It keeps my mind from going blank. Blank. I like when it's quiet. I scribble when I don't think. A pit forms. The pursuit grows. Form, happiness is adorned. Quit telling the worlds gone. Blink...Breath...Air blown by leaves. At last it seems.

-Danial

