

SAME A COLLECTION OF **ME**
POEMS

VOLUME 3

ART + RHYME
2021



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I FOREWORD

Our fifth season of Art+Rhyme began in February 2021 after many months of preparation. Our goal was to transition our in-person and in-gallery program into a virtual one. Like many educators and museums across the country, we set out to find how to best engage with students through a virtual platform. We asked ourselves, “How can we make authentic connections with students amid a global pandemic?” We looked to the original goals of our Art+Rhyme program to guide the process: encouraging students to participate in a discussion about the issues and topics the artists are addressing in their artwork, providing an opportunity for students to make connections between those themes and their own lives, and finally, inspiring them to write a poem in response to the discussion and the artwork.

By utilizing a digital writing platform, students had the ability to write their poetry in real time. We kept Zoom discussions dynamic and featured artwork live from the gallery. What we discovered was both enlightening and powerful.

Students were encouraged to engage using the Zoom chat feature, sharing emojis, and using the “raise hand” function when they wished to share out loud. Our team of Visitor Experience Leads created a welcoming space for all students and prompted those who were not as comfortable speaking out to chat them directly during the session if they needed help. While our in-person program tends to favor more extroverted students, the virtual sessions provided a range of methods for all students to participate. During our virtual sessions, each student had their own private digital writing space to create poems based on their

lived experiences. Students who remained quiet during the discussion then felt emboldened to write without the pressure of being observed by their peers.

The themes we discussed throughout this season were identity, memory, and the importance of icons and music in our lives. Students bravely shared poems about their family life and how they felt they are treated differently because of their race, ethnicity, or gender. Discussions about the artworks were thoughtful, moving, and at times, even comical.

We feared that our connection to the students would lessen by going virtual; however, we soon found out that we were still able to engage in an intimate and immediate way. Every session, we were honored that students felt brave and inspired enough to share their thoughts and writing with us. We are especially proud of the students’ efforts to express themselves through poetry during this challenging year of Zoom fatigue and isolation. This collection of poems speaks to their courage to speak out and be heard.

April De Leon
Group Visits Manager

Celia Lopez
Visitor Services Lead

Christina Ybarra
Supervisor, Visitor Experience
and Youth Initiatives/Outreach

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR VISITOR EXPERIENCE LEADS



Working directly with the students for this Art+Rhyme season was an inspiring experience, especially as this last year has brought on an intense sense of isolation. Every student left me in awe of their strength and their voice, even though we could only connect in a virtual space. I am so incredibly proud of their bravery and their vulnerability!

—Chelsea Trinh



My favorite part of the program was listening to the students’ interpretation of artwork I thought I knew well. They changed the way I look at some paintings entirely. They also wrote really beautiful poetry in a very short amount of time, and I have faith that they will stay inspired to keep creating art long after this experience.

—David Candelaria



I’ll never forget the different ways the students enjoyed the workshop: the bubbling enthusiasm, the quiet contemplation, and even though some didn’t say a word, I could see them looking and listening. I’m glad we were able to take a field trip away from our different rooms even if it was only for a little while.

—Sherie Mateo



The best part of this program is when dialogue would take place with the students. Some students were vulnerable with their thoughts, while others were strong in their opinions yet open to different perspectives. It was so amazing to be part of that artistic journey with them in the shared community space we created. Well done to you all!

—Anita Velasco



I POETRY NIGHT

On Thursday, June 17, 2021, The Broad hosted its first virtual Poetry Night. We welcomed back students who participated in this season of Art+Rhyme. The students submitted the poems they created in response to artworks by artists such as Ray Smith, Nathaniel Mary Quinn, and Paul Pfeiffer. Held over Zoom and streamed live to the museum's YouTube channel, we had twenty students read their poems with the same bravery and vulnerability that they demonstrated during their virtual class visit. We were joined by special guest poet Yosimar Reyes. Reyes wrote an original poem inspired by Ray Smith's painting *El Pollo* (1987). Reyes explained, "The concept was the personification of a queer tio/elder speaking to a new generation. I imagine in the picture the man with beak being a caretaker to a new generation of gallos. I think since it's Pride Month, I wanted to affirm our queer youth."

Reyes closed out the night by sharing words of encouragement and affirmation for our student poets to continue their creative journey: "One of the things that poetry allowed me is to envision



a future and a life that I wanted to build. That's the beautiful thing about art is that we can write ourselves into the freedom we want...poetry is a reminder that we are all trying to figure out this life...we are building a world with many worlds in it."

Yosimar Reyes is a nationally acclaimed poet and public speaker who explores themes of sexuality and migration. *The Advocate* named Reyes one of "13 LGBT Latinos Changing the World," and *Remezcla* included Reyes on their list of "10 Up and Coming Latinx Poets You Need To Know." Reyes is a LAMBDA Literary Fellow and a recipient of the UndocuPoets Fellowship.



TÍO GALLO BY YOSIMAR REYES

Sometimes I want to have the words for my mother
To describe my magic
I wish there was a language
Palabras
For her to just get it

I want to show that this body
This enate thing
I possess
Is one of my biggest assets

Pero en Español
All I have is violence
What difference
Would it make in the world
If as kids
Our own parents
Affirmed our difference

Instead of policing
Our masculinities
Allowed us
To discover
Endless possibilities

How many tears
We would have saved
That instead of shame
We were greeted with a parade
I know she tried
Her best
That is why I don't blame her

I know somewhere
In the place
She was raised
No one believed in her
She was girl

She was poor
She was soft

This world is not made for our tenderness
And in rough terrain
I have also grown hard

But I must remind myself
That in a world
That tries to turn us
Into robots
All we have to be is heart

The beauty I see in you
Young one
Is how you are taking
This world and shaking it at its core

Look at you
How you came out of the womb
Queer as hell
With words
And definitions
It took me textbooks to learn

This world belongs to you now
And all I can do is sit back and watch you bloom
I am your Tío
El gallo que no quiso pelear
The queer one

My role now is to be here to catch you
To show you all the lessons I had to figure out on my own

Baby, you are not alone
We are in this together

Now go and live your truth
But stay where your tío can see you

ALEXIS DELGADO

responding to

PAUL PFEIFFER, *FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE #14/17, 2004*

In a life filled with others the voices carry your deeds and accomplishments

Carrying them across the world

Once they are heard they cannot be unheard

Now you are a person with fame and recognition it being a blessing or a curse is for you to decide

ALISSA GUILLEN

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, *UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND), 1989*

My body is a battleground.

A target and symbol to those around me.

A battle of society and lust, from being told to cover up and to hold on to your brother so that you aren't fondled in a crowd.

To being told that you were asking for attention because of the dress you chose to wear for yourself.

You are seen as an object instead of a person all because of the way your body was shaped.

From too tight to too loose no matter what you wear your body will be seen and thoughts will of others will never fade.

ANAIS GALINDO

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, *C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019*

Trabajando todo los dias

Trabajando para una vida mejor

Trabajando para nosotros

Trabajando para que tenemos una vida mejor

Trabajando hora por hora con poco descansos

Trabajando

dos trabajos

AOLANI CABRERA

responding to

PAUL PFEIFFER, *FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE #14/17, 2004*

The lady of my life

the one who makes me, me.

She shows a light,

so I can see.

Despite the hardships and difficult times

she's always there to help at her prime.

The one who keeps me safe

but also there to give me faith.

It is never too hard for her in my eyes

but I don't see her when she cries.

Despite what she goes through internally

She'll never fail to give to us wholeheartedly.

ASHLEY LAM

responding to

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT, *HORN PLAYERS*, 1983

The anxiety and stress accumulate like a balloon waiting to pop,
I patiently doze off with the music playing in the background,
the monotonous tone of my life is dragged out as I await for the song to start, my serenity,
a saving grace,
a familiar tone to keep me sane the sound of her voice surrounds me as I am immersed in
an intimate moment between the song and I,
as my confident blooms like a flower awaiting for spring,
a walk in the garden as I embrace the problems awaiting.

The music flows through my ears,
genres range as the complex blend of instruments create a harmony,
I embrace the change as music allows me to move on from the past.
The depth and complexity of the piano and horns blend,
music brings us all together, as the artist expresses individuality.
The anxiety and stress accumulate like a balloon waiting to pop,
I patiently doze off as the song comes to an end,
the monotonous tone of my life is dragged out as I wait for the song to start,
my serenity, a saving grace,
A familiar tone to keep me sane the sound of her voice surrounds me,
I am immersed in an intimate moment between the song and I,
As my confidence blooms like a flower waiting for spring,
A walk in the garden puts my mind to rest.

responding to

THE THEME OF IDENTITY

Born in America, raised Chinese, a unique
experience,
consequences still follow, I can be seen as
a minority,

Being looked at as “different” and not “fitting
in” to the culture, makes me feel out of place,
Hearing the stories of how my parents and
family found their place in our world brings
me hope, Of what the future could bring, yet
change is constant but slow.

An inclusive society where everyone is
welcome no matter their skin color.

A blend of two complex, captivating, yet
completely different cultures,

An intertwining, braided experience,

With different lessons emphasized, parenting
styles vastly vary

All to shape me into the Chinese American
I am today,

with both cultures being a piece of my heritage,
To create a distinct household and personality.

Traditions and habits clash, having me choose
between my past and present,

The conflict and tension remains, with religion,
food, beliefs on the opposite sides of the
spectrum, Mandarin and Cantonese, a
somewhat secret language between my
family and I,

Part of who I am, being trilingual.

Seeing how Asian food has become widely
accepted.

A sign of change, that I am no longer an
outsider, I am an essential part of America now.

Proof the American Dream is existent,
With both my parents and grandparents
working hard to provide more,
Contributing towards the idea of a diverse,
multicultural society

bringing me back to my childhood.

The smell of fresh fish and rice balls in a
cinnamon sugar syrup,

Everyone looks different, putting aside our
differences to celebrate our similarities,

Reconciling and catching up, “You got taller,
you got skinnier, you got chubbier,”

Family comes first, “respect your elders” is the way,
with red, the lucky color being everywhere,

Arguments with my parents, their ideals
verses mine,

Hard to find a common ground to settle on,
We do our best to understand each other.

Keeping quiet is sometimes the best solution
as my Mom tells me,

No use starting an argument I am bound to lose.

Being a minority in America has its positives,
Like showing others how to say “Gong Ha Fa
Choy” during the New Year,

Sharing my culture with other minorities and
seeing our similarities,

The nostalgic feeling of being connected to
society as a young Chinese American woman.

BLESSING THEUS

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND), 1989

I've lived 40 different lives in my small life.

Rebirthing everything in a new being.

A new creation, too many lines, too many spectrums and too many voices to explain.

All I know is that they form to create one whole being.

With my whole mind and soul, I know this to be true.

The battle I fight continues on within me.

DAMON LE

responding to

JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT, HORN PLAYERS, 1983

Repeating beats that sooth my ears,

Clearing my mind and saving my tears.

Music is in my life everyday,

They scare my problems to go away.

Untangling knots with every rhythm,

Music truly solves any algorithm.

Tapping my feet and nodding my head,

Music is something that can be widespread.

From harmonious melodies to catchy tunes,

I wouldn't skip any song too soon.

There's a meaning behind every song,

But, nevertheless, any song is a definite sing-along.

EMANUEL ESPARZA

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019

Whenever I go in for a hug, she receives me with open arms.

When she asks for help, I don't think about it for a second.

She takes care of me since I was young.

I'll provide for her when the time comes.

EMILY ROBLES

responding to

THE THEME OF IDENTITY

Sociedad, un lugar donde pertenezco
físicamente, aunque mentalmente elevo
por cielo

Sociedad, me impone hablar, me mantiene
silenciosa

Sociedad, me dijo que no debo estar triste

Sociedad, me enseno que sin el colegio no
tengo futuro

Sociedad, me dijo que solo soy americana
pero...

Sociedad, no me conoce

Sociedad, no mira que detras de mi mascara
tengo lagrimas

Sociedad, no mira mi lucha y mis esfuerzos

Sociedad, no sabe que orgullosamente tambien
soy mexicana al igual que americana

Sociedad, un lugar done mi mente se convierte
en un bello desastre

Sociedad, un lugar donde mi silencio es lo mas
poderoso

Sociedad, el lugar que me recuera que lo que
hago y quien soy no debe impresionar a nadie y
es por eso que me mantengo silenciosa detras de
mis lagrimas

Sociedad, un lugar cruelmente confuse

ESTEFANIA TORRES

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND), 1989

Self-appreciation is difficult to find within the homosapien body.

It isn't easy and takes time to realize that it is an amazing invention.

The scars, the moles, the different hues of skin, the peach fuzz, the DNA that assembles the face and its features.

Self-hatred, however, is very simple to acknowledge and takes hold of the wonder that should be there and said.

We complain that we didn't receive a certain eye color, or that we were not born with a certain skin tone, even complain about format of our face.

Not only is it a constant battle between love and pain, it is a battle of deciding whether it is enough.

ESTELA MIRANDA

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019

You're loud

Colorful, sparkling in darkness and light

Always getting lost in your green eyes

Green eyes that Always seemed to change

Nails painted and fresh

Not a care for the outside world

No knowledge of the people he's saved

Selfless always working

I wonder what your green eyes are today

GAVIN MCCOY

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019

Though you weren't here long, you made an impact

In Fact

You were the reason why I tried hard to be happy

I'm sorry if you see that everything happening is making me snappy

I know I get fearful a lot

I get tearful but I try not

To, even though my mind is in two

I feel sick, but it's not the flu

It's most likely me thinking about you

Specifically, about your well-being

Must be hard up there seeing

Everything go down and making sure I'm okay

But each day, I get worse if I have to say

Your grandson will be alright

I can hold my own using all my might, even though I know it'll be a fight.

HONEY ROBINSON

responding to

PAUL PFEIFFER, *FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE #14/17, 2004*

Sacrificing connection with the world
Touching the lives of millions, you'll never know
Always aiming for more
Riding the wave of life

KIARA LOZANO

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, *UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND), 1983*

The love for my body is the battle I must face.
It hurts when I refuse to look at the beauty it holds.
The scars, and everything in between has not experience the love it deserved.
The cuts, the bruises, and the sadness it holds.
It deserved my love and more.
My 1st home was damaged to the core but I rebuilt myself up with all my love my body deserves and so much more.
Yes, my body is a battle but it was the battle worth fighting.

MERCY AN GONZALEZ

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, *C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019*

Poem #1

I am a hard working person who loves to have fun
I wonder how my friends/family are doing
I hear the silence getting louder and louder
I see the stars coming closer and closer
I want to make my family proud
I am a hard working person who loves to have fun
I pretend that I am the only person in the world
I feel like someone is always with me
I touch a person from another universe
I worry that I will be left alone
I cry when I am empty
I am a hard working person who loves to have fun
I understand that people come and go
I say like it is true dream one day
I will be filled with laughter
I try to smile but it goes away
I hope one day someone can help me from sadness
I am a hard working person who loves to have fun

Poem #2

Life is so complicated.

When did life become so complicated?

There will always be problems where you least expect.

Especially those who laugh behind your back.

Don't wait for things to get better,

Nothing is easy and predictable.

As for me, not a single thing can be accomplished without complications. I stand for what I believe and everything is so much harder these days. Hoping there is a better world out there where I can fit in.

Humans in this world are just so cruel.

Why did life become so complicated?

No one really knows nor has a reason why,

All I know is that

Life is very complicated.

MIRIAM AWAN

responding to

RAY SMITH, *EL POLLO*, 1987

In America, only, do people start every sentence with I

She had told me distastefully years ago I was

I will &

I am.

Better to keep quiet and let actions speak for themselves rather than I

Yet in the nation of a thousand tongues,

Where you suffer in silence rather than speak,

In the nation of a thousand textures,

Where you find your own the most troubling to keep,

You lay under the friendly or scrutinizing gaze of

A hundred million eyes,

How else can one be American

What else is so entirely human

Than to declare

"I"?

MITZI RAMOS

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, *UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND)*, 1983

Poem #1

He aprendido la diferencia

Entre amor verdadero e ilusión

Tantas veces eh sido lastima y criticada

Con el engaño y la traición

Por el mundo

Por la vida

Pero siempre florezco como un capullo

Que está esperando el Sol.

Poem #2

Mi vida ha sido como la de una horuga,

Me eh arrastrando para poder Triunfar

Eh pasado frío,

Eh pasado hambre,

Eh conocido malas plantas,

Pero aún así,

Sigo volando como una mariposa,

Viviendo de lo bueno y aprendiendo de lo malo.

REBECCA OREGEL

responding to

BARBARA KRUGER, UNTITLED (YOUR BODY IS A BATTLEGROUND), 1983

One thing's for sure

I wasn't born to fight

I prefer the peace of the ocean or the laughter of others

As I grow older

I realize that's not allowed

My body is morphed and changed, eating the opinions of others

My body grew as a battleground

where I assumed flowers would grow

REN BUCIO

responding to

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN, C'MO' AND WALK WITH ME, 2019

Poem #1

They say that you carry bits and

pieces of the ones you love all

throughout your life, weaving a patchwork quilt.

Mine would be a symphony of blues

deeper than the ocean, yellow rays of

sunshine, bruising purples and blues, and the

color of your rage and roses.

With grey rainy days spent on wild beaches

sprinkled all over, dotting the edges. But,

what color would three am with you in the kitchen

while I soothe away your bad dreams be?

Or sticky sweet lips from rock candy pressed against your

cheek as you curve your body away

from mines, shame heavy on your mind?

Poem #2

I still do my tea with honey and lemon

even though I haven't talked to her in over a year.

As I laze in the sun, I remember

sleepy eyes and a smile that makes

the world seem softer for just a minute.

I hear their voice in the

crash of the waves against a cliff,

a strong and powerful constant reassurance.

Friday's will always be movie night and for

baking with or without you here next

to me. The bottle of perfume you

gave me sits on my dresser alongside

the bottle of my father's cologne and a

chipped wooden elephant that used to be

my grandmother's that no one fought over because

there were other nicer things than him,

with his paint peeling and trunk chipped.

Poem #3

Our favorite book's pages will always be bent
from the last time I read it to you. never opened after you
left so that way, your laugh at the
start of chapter three doesn't fade away
like our intermingled breath on that bitter December night.
My copy of the little prince hidden far away from my sight
so that way, I don't think about sweet darling space boys,
floating in and out of my life, and princes with
gold and honey dripping from each sigh of their voice,
heads heavy from the weight of ancestors past.
If only we could see each other through the other's
eyes so you could see that your
smile molds and gently softens the curves of
my wax heart, leaving behind a soft ache in my soul.
Leaving behind a you sized hole in my heart.
how the world should soften itself and make
space for you instead like you deserve.

SAKURA PONCE

responding to

PAUL PFEIFFER, *FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE* #14/17, 2004

Fame

Lights so bright and blinding
A voice so bold and clear
The Fame Monster
Standing and singing right here
The audience they cheer
For an icon was made

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