

SOMEWHERE IN CLEVELAND

THE CLEVELAND FED SCHOLARS
STORY PROJECT

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK *of* CLEVELAND



The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, part of the US central bank, works to maintain the value of money through monetary policy, bank supervision, and services to financial institutions and the US Treasury. The Bank also supports the well-being of communities through research, outreach, and education activities.

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FOREWORD

The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is proud to share *Somewhere in Cleveland*, a collection of poems and short stories written by seven local high school students who participated in our Fed Scholars Program in 2016. Fed Scholars is an immersive work-study program that the Cleveland Fed has organized each summer for the past seven years. The idea for this anthology arose as the students worked in various departments throughout the Cleveland Fed. As they contributed to various projects, the students also shared with us some of the things on their minds, including school, friends, family, and the future. And we wanted to share these stories with you.

As the president of a regional Federal Reserve Bank, I have access to data and research to help me evaluate the state of the economy, a necessary step in setting appropriate monetary policy. I also have the privilege of engaging with people across the region. The information they provide is an important part of the evaluation process. The economy has made many important strides in coming back from the Great Recession, but there are still communities in the region that face some challenges.

In this volume, the students elaborate on some of the challenges they face, but they also express a sense of hope. The students' stories are candid, written in their own words, and informed by their daily lives. Woven throughout the book are threads of youthful optimism and pride in their communities—something I find inspiring. I hope you will value reading this book as much as I have.

Loretta J. Mester
President and CEO
Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland has partnered with local community agencies to engage a group of area high school students in a paid summer learning experience: the Fed Scholars Program. Designed to impart students with valuable life skills, the immersive program helps make them *next ready*—ready for the next phase of their lives. Over the years, in addition to working in the Cleveland Fed’s Money Museum, the students have had opportunities to explore potential careers, gain financial literacy, craft strong college admission essays, and acquire public speaking skills.

This year, seven Fed Scholars from Lincoln-West High School in Cleveland’s Clark-Fulton neighborhood added a very special line to their resumes: published authors.

Anthony
Antonio
Deepak
Francis
Ivory
Jessica
Terrance

Their words. Their city.

Somewhere in Cleveland.

OUR CLEVELAND

COLLABORATIVE

Antonio

Jessica

Ivory

Deepak

Cleveland is a Place Where...

Cleveland is a place where the
weather can't make up its mind.

You know you've arrived when you
think you moved enough to miss a pothole
but didn't.

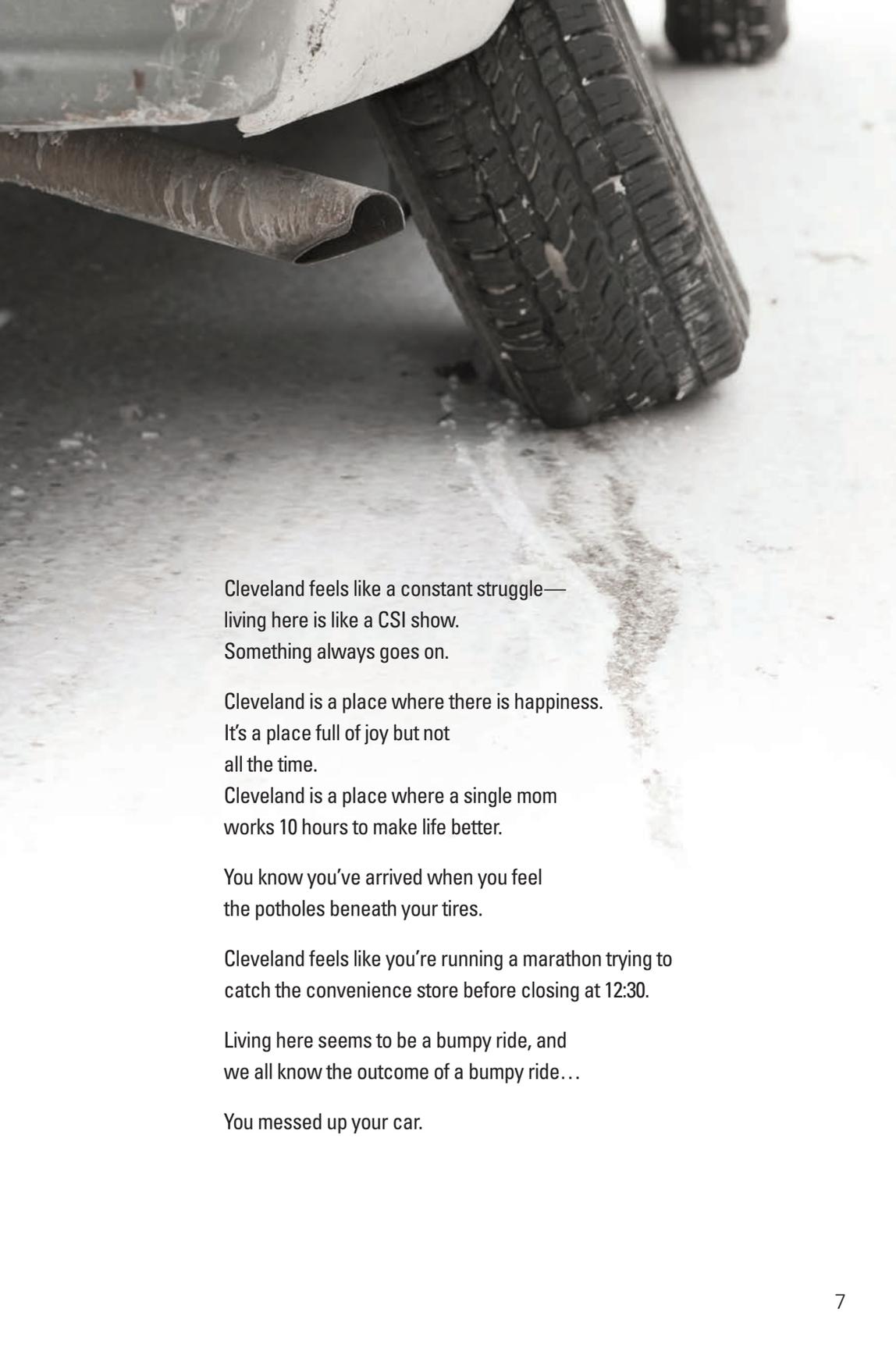
Welcome to Cleveland's bumpy roads.
Cleveland feels like never-ending speed bumps.
Living here gives you stress, tension, joy, sadness, and hope.
Cleveland is a place where
homes go abandoned because
of financial problems.

You know you've arrived when the fresh air
is knocked out your lungs and replaced with polluted air.

Cleveland feels like
walking on a rocky place
with naked feet.

Growing up here is unforgettable.

Cleveland is a place where gunshots
outside are normal.
You know you've arrived when someone is dead
and there's a crime investigation going on.



Cleveland feels like a constant struggle—
living here is like a CSI show.
Something always goes on.

Cleveland is a place where there is happiness.
It's a place full of joy but not
all the time.

Cleveland is a place where a single mom
works 10 hours to make life better.

You know you've arrived when you feel
the potholes beneath your tires.

Cleveland feels like you're running a marathon trying to
catch the convenience store before closing at 12:30.

Living here seems to be a bumpy ride, and
we all know the outcome of a bumpy ride...

You messed up your car.

JESSICA

Cleveland

The day is busy in Cleveland City.
Sometimes rough, sometimes life's not pretty.
But there's life, and love for our Cleveland City.
As the sun rises, we see our skyline. It may be crazy,
but our view is pretty nice.
Cleveland's skyline isn't pretty?
Day by day we love our city.



Somewhere in America

Somewhere in Cleveland kids play around,
thinking they're safe when a couple of
minutes later they hear shots
and hot bullet casings hitting the ground.

Somewhere in America children argue with their parents
tell them they hate them,
and how things aren't fair—
while other kids are wishing
that their parents were still here.

Somewhere in America kids are getting free college—
their parents are paying for it.
Some refer to it as a full ride.
While others are working overtime making money
for college, struggling to save
every quarter, nickel, penny, and dime.



TERRANCE

Being from a Championship City

In Cleveland, you wouldn't expect to see people celebrating great things, especially team championships.

When you walk outside on the streets of Cleveland, you normally see fights...and sometimes arguments, but over the past couple of days people have been extremely happy! Celebrating the energy of the Cavs, fans going on for hours, fireworks, watch party fans, and neighboring houses all roaring in happiness, all for the 1st win in Cleveland Cavaliers history.

I'm not exactly a Cavs fan, but I guess I could say I'm proud of my city, not for winning, but for putting the violence aside for a few days.

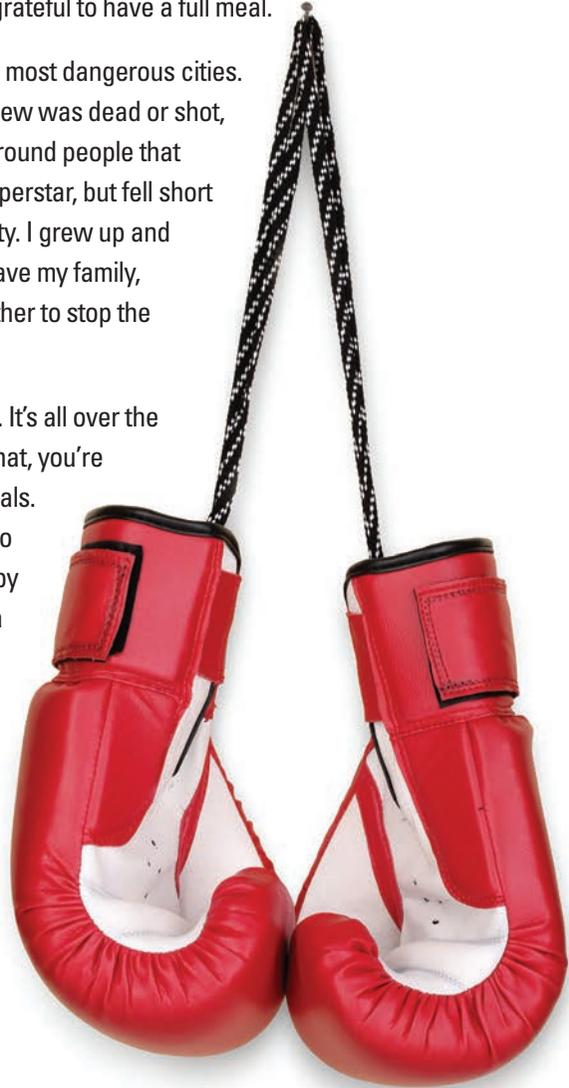
FRANCIS

Violence in Cleveland

I was born in a dangerous environment, a bad city where people killed each other. I was born when presidents didn't think about the poor. I was born when your life wasn't guaranteed, when you would be grateful to have a full meal.

I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio—one of the most dangerous cities. Every day it seemed like someone you knew was dead or shot, in the hospital, lying in a bed. I grew up around people that would do anything to have the life of a superstar, but fell short because of gun violence or police brutality. I grew up and now I want to become a pro boxer and save my family, possibly my city, by bringing people together to stop the violence.

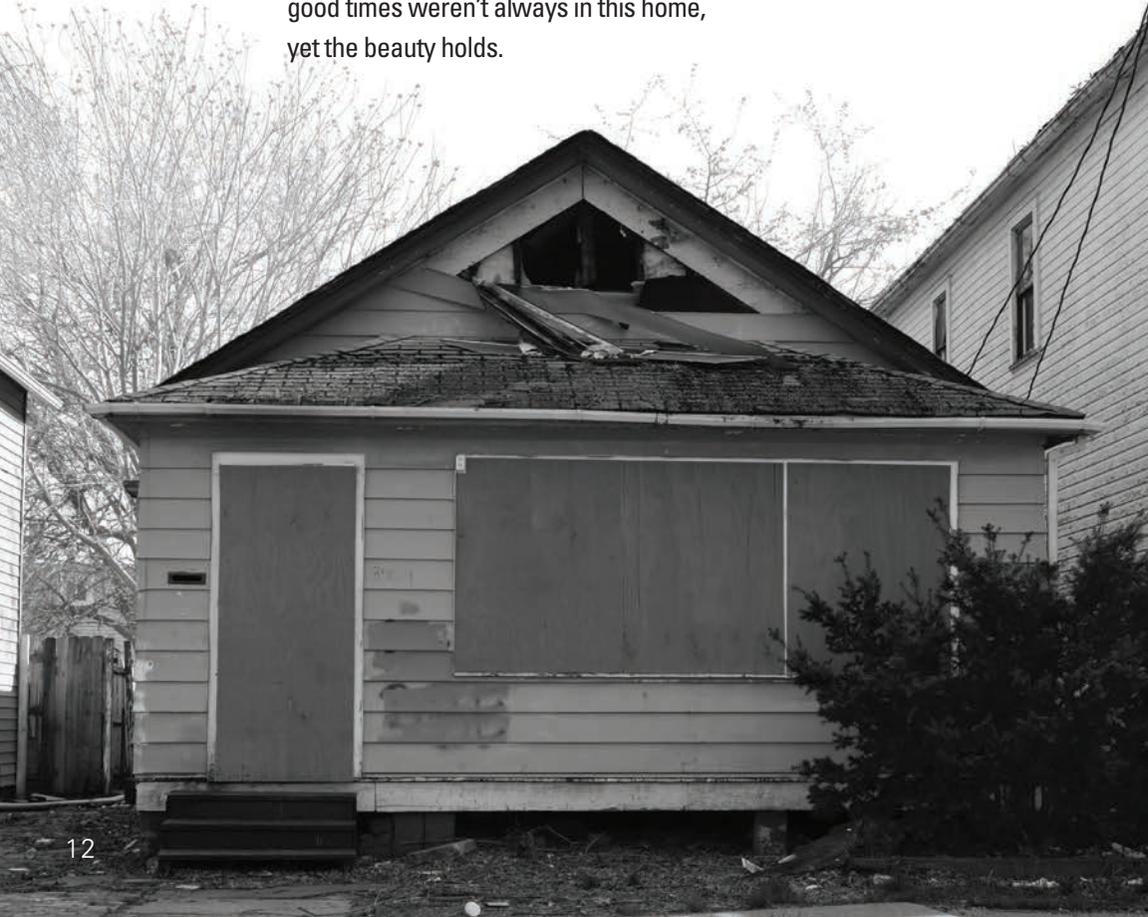
I've studied that violence is not only here. It's all over the world in different ways and, no matter what, you're going to fail when trying to reach your goals. You're going to come up short and want to give it your all. In the end you will be happy knowing you gave it your all. You will be a better and happier person.



ANTONIO

Cleveland is Beautiful

Cleveland is beautiful.
This house proves it true,
because though not in color the beauty still shines through.
Even though wood is chipped,
paint is peeling,
windows are boarded up,
and stairs creak when you step,
inside is where I believe the beauty is kept.
It holds history,
and mystery,
families that lived with glee and some even with misery.
It's beautiful,
and truth be told,
good times weren't always in this home,
yet the beauty holds.



FRANCIS

Cleveland Today

Today, the Cleveland I live in is filled with gangs and lacks jobs. These gangs are recruiting people my age and younger to do things for them. I can't even hang with those people anymore because what they do reflects on me.

Cleveland may seem like a bad city, but to me Cleveland is filled with champions—the Cavs, the Monsters, the heavyweight UFC champion Stipe Miocic, and soon to be boxing champion—me. The city is filled with talent, including Markell Johnson, Roy Hatchet, Jermon Ivy, Thomas Mattice, and the 2016 Olympian Charles Conwell Jr. If you don't know those people, look them up.

Cleveland has a lot of heart. Over the past 4 years the city has been remodeling itself. I see at least 3 people every day standing up to stop the violence that goes on around here. I feel, know, and believe Cleveland will be great again because if it comes down to it, I'll be the difference maker in this world filled with violence.

ANTONIO

Cleveland Today

Some people don't like Cleveland because of its past reputation. Some people don't like Cleveland because of its present issues. No one can see the future, but some people already say they don't like that, either. I can say I don't like Cleveland because of its past, too. I don't like Cleveland because of its present issues. And I definitely don't like what I see in Cleveland's future. I don't like Cleveland—I love Cleveland.

I love Cleveland's past. It was amazing how much money they managed to make and how much they helped America. I love Cleveland's present. We manage to get through our issues and still help each other when needed. We come together when in a struggle, and we have every right to be hated by the people who look through the windows of our home. They only see the yelling but they don't hear the words.

They don't know we're yelling over violence, and our words are words of encouragement. They only see what the news shows them. They only see the violence but don't see what incited that violence behind that closed door. So, they have every right to assume. What they see is what they get. They only see violence, so they will only get violence.

ANTONIO





ANTONIO

However, if they came in through that door, what they would see is a loving family who has their ups and downs. And if they choose to stay, that is exactly what they'll get. I love Cleveland for the promising future that it has. Everything about Cleveland screams potential. Everything about Cleveland possesses the capability to be great, and I believe it will be just that. All sports teams show promise (even the Browns) and have shown great determination and heart, even during struggles. This is what we do, constantly, every day.

I don't think Cleveland is what it used to be. There used to be a lot of factories that provided a lot of jobs. These factories were forced to shut down, which left us with less jobs and less money, which led to a smaller population. However, these closings of factories also led to less air pollution, less injuries, and an increase in Cleveland's inventiveness. Cleveland has rebuilt itself from the ground up.

Our city shows great determination and heart even when we're struggling. That's what makes this city great. That's why we are champions. That is why this city is nothing like what it used to be, and I'm 100% fine with that.

TERRANCE

Cleveland Skyline

A view of one of the most beautiful cities I know.
When I view it, it's not always from the top;
it's usually from the bottom,
where all the life is:
people coming, going, stopping, shopping, and conversing.
Food shops and barbershops fill Cleveland's streets.
I don't have to travel far for an adventure,
when there's always one right in front of me.
My city, Cleveland!
Where there's always something new to
find,
study,
adventure,
and discuss!



Observation Deck at Terminal Tower

The Cleveland I see from Terminal Tower is the Cleveland no one has ever seen, including me, the one I look down upon.

Up here it looks peaceful and safe, but down on the ground it's loud and lightweight dangerous. Up here you don't have to worry about the crazy guy on the bus, the children running while not watching where they're going, cars that seem as if they're hunting you down and the weird guys that stare for way too long.

Up here you're alone with your thoughts wondering, "Why can't down there be like up here?"



Championship City

Now that Cleveland is a championship town, I feel like we have a better chance of winning in other areas. I feel like Cleveland's win was set apart from all other major teams because we've had no success in 52 years, so nobody ever expected Cleveland to win anything. Now that we have a UFC champion, hockey champions, and NBA champions, I feel people will put Cleveland up there with many other successful teams. I feel like other Cleveland teams will feed off of the energy of the Cavs and try to bring another championship. I think other major teams would want to have a big parade like the Cavs did.

IVORY

Cleveland

Cleveland is home.

It's where something bad gets torn down, but something good replaces it.

It's where you turn something negative into a positive.

Cleveland is change,

a change I am willing to take every chance I get.

What makes Cleveland?

The people make Cleveland,

people that dedicate their whole lives to making Cleveland less rusty.

Removing rust is difficult but not too difficult.

It's going to take a while for Cleveland to be shiny again,

but I bet it's going to be worth the wait.



DEEPAK

Dream City

New dream, new city.
I came here to do something big,
leaving my relatives and friends
far away from home, very far.
I used to be happy for a moment—
didn't know what I lost
in this strange country.
In the group of strangers,
searching for someone special.
New dream, new city.
I came here with hope
to do something big.

GIO

Cleveland Today

Cleveland is a struggling city as far as employment and safety. But we're trying to get better by doing whatever we can. For example, one good thing about Lincoln-West High School is that we participate in food banks and community clean ups. Cleveland has lots of gangs. Cleveland is violence. But besides that, there are many people I see on the streets of Cleveland trying to get people to do better.

IVORY

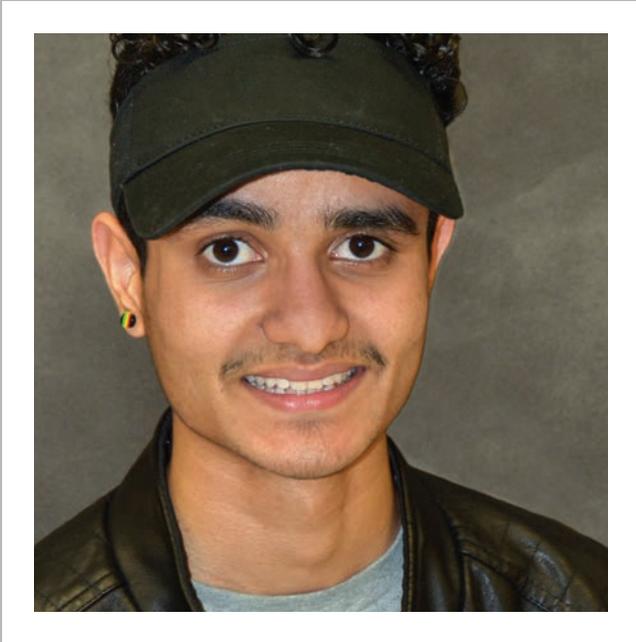
Cleveland Is...

Cleveland is a place where you taste excitement.
A place where the hotdog stand is so close you can just taste the chili Polish boy with sauerkraut, mustard, ketchup, and extra cheese.

Cleveland is a place where you can taste freedom.



OUR STORIES



DEEPAK

Born and raised in Nepal, Deepak considers himself “new” to Cleveland. He loves to write poetry because it is inspiring, and he enjoys reading books, quotes, and poems that have lessons that can help people. He also loves music, sports such as cricket, and spending time with his friends. He enjoys making people laugh, and his friends say he has a great sense of humor. After graduating, Deepak wants to attend college and major in accounting.

DEEPAK

I Belong

I belong to the silent street. I
walk alone every time. I
laugh out loud. I
take a bus to school. I
want to climb the mountains. I
want to get lost in nature
with a cool waterfall.

Homeland

These green trees,
these little windows,
these roads,
these stores,
these raindrops,
these
cold windy days,
these clouds remind me of my homeland.

There were many trees that my grandpa planted near our house,
trees with many branches
and tiny leaves.

There were many little beautiful windows:
from there, I used to view outside world.

The stores where I used to go to buy candies
look the same here.

The store person reminds me
of my friend's dad,
he's quiet and doesn't laugh even if it's funny.
Everything here reminds me of my homeland.



Leaving My Birthplace

The day that I left my birthplace was cold—cold wind was blowing and touching my ears and saying, “Goodbye, Deepak.” I was sad because I was leaving the place where I grew up. I was sad because I was leaving my friends, with whom I spent most of my time. I was sad that I was going to a strange place full of strangers.

The journey of my life started that day. I still remember that night we gathered. My friends were giving me ideas. They were keeping me calm because I was worried and scared. I still remember that they said, “Don’t worry, everything’s gonna be alright. We’re gonna meet again one day.” I left my birthplace keeping hopes inside me that I’m going to return one day.

It’s been a year here in Cleveland, and now I’m sitting here in class reminiscing about those days. It makes me smile, it gives me happiness, and it makes me proud that I was born there. I love my birthplace.

Somewhere

Somewhere in Cleveland there's a place—
from there you can get a view of a lovely sunrise.
Somewhere in Cleveland there's a place—
from there you can see lake touching sky.
Somewhere in Nepal there's a place—
from there you can see the highest peak of the world.
Somewhere in Nepal there's a place
where lord Gautam Buddha was born.
Somewhere in Nepal there's a place
where you can feel you're free—like a flying bird.
Somewhere in Cleveland there's a place
where you can spend your weekend happily.
Somewhere in this world there's a place where
I'll rest in peace forever.

The Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is a place where you can see things you never think of. It's a place full of surprises, amazement, and cool stuff. I saw many amazing things and weird things. I picked up some of them. They gave me feelings and reminded me of my past.

I chose "Mother Holding Her Child" as my favorite thing in the museum because it shows the love of the mother. When I was a kid, I used to always do silly things. I used to mess up the whole house. Everyone in my family used to yell at me. But mom is the only one who didn't yell, and used to say politely, "It's okay, son." She's the one who gave me life. Whatever I am now is only because of her. She's the plant, and I'm the flower. It really reminded me of my mom.



My Grandpa

My Grandpa, old but still young at heart.

When I was small, I used to be with him all the time.

He loved to give me lessons.

I used to see him climbing trees.

He was a great climber.

My grandpa, old but still young at heart.

He used to pick sweet mangos for me.

He loved travelling long journeys and every time he used to take me with him.

I used to fall asleep in his strong arms while travelling on the bus.

We used to eat together.

He wouldn't eat without me.

He used to tell me goodnight stories in bed so that I could sleep well.

My grandpa, old but still young at heart.

It was summertime and he took me for a tour.

It was very hot—we were sweaty.

We had to walk in that hot sun.

It was like Hell for me.

My feet hurt—

I was not able to walk.

At that time he carried me on his back and walked like two hours.

It was one of the most memorable things in my life.

I still remember that day—

my superhero,

my grandpa,

old but still young at heart.

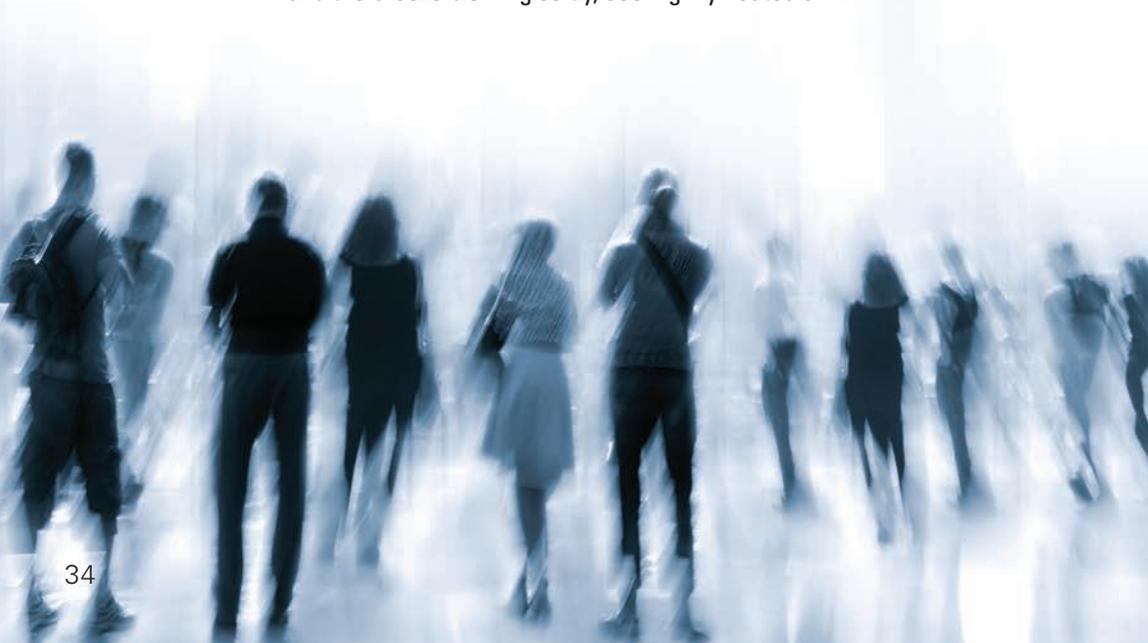


IVORY

Ivory has lived in Cleveland her whole life. She loves writing and journalism, and she enjoys telling stories about her family and childhood. In addition to participating in the Fed Scholars program, she also reports for the school newspaper, *The Wolverine Scene*. For fun, Ivory enjoys reading romance novels. Her goal is to work in the education system as a therapist, so that she can help students.

Walking Poem

I hear traffic,
busy streets,
car radios,
cars in need of a tune-up
and construction workers hammering the ground
as if they were beating someone they hate.
I see couples exploring the downtown world,
businessmen rushing to catch a meeting they're late for,
the little old lady chasing down the bus
and joggers pushing themselves until they reach their ideal look.
I smell food trucks,
hot dog vendors,
fresh flowers
and the chemicals coming from vehicles
that are slowly killing our air.
I feel the fabric from a passing pedestrian's shoulder,
the rays of the sun tanning my skin
and the breeze blowing softly, cooling my heated skin.



Candy Man

When I was younger, I lived in front of this old man. We called him Candy Man. He would always give us candy every time he saw us kids, no matter where we were. We would even knock on his door to ask for some. Every time something bad happened he'd make sure that we didn't see it. He used the candy as a distraction. That's what I realized as I got older. I realized he was a bad guy, also. But if he was so bad why did he protect us from bad things and people? That's the question I have asked for years.

I have never gotten an answer to that until a couple years ago. He didn't want us kids to see that he was bad because he wanted us to be good. He didn't want us to end up like him. He wanted us to be different from the rest. He may not be as good as I thought, and he may not do acceptable things in the eyes of the public, but he was good to us kids, and I thank him for that every day.

You're Too Young

"They won't let you. You're too young," are words I hate hearing. Enough is enough. So what that I'm too young? I can't buy liquor; it's bad for your kidneys anyways. I can't buy cigarettes; they're bad for your lungs anyways. I can't get into a club; it's crowded and smells bad anyways. I can't go to the movies and see a R-rated film; it's probably horrible anyways. I can't have a hysterectomy, because I'm too young. I want little kids that will ruin my clothes, my house, and their clothes, and scream, cry, and poop everywhere.

Now pause right there. Who am I kidding? I don't want those rotten things running around. I don't want little Ivories running around. Do you know how bad that'll be? More Ivories? The world is already falling apart with one. We don't need a world that is overloaded with sarcasm, literal responses, smart remarks, conceitedness, straight-forwardness and arrogance.

"You're too young" is the worst line ever. Don't use it. Or I'll populate the world with little Ivories. You've been warned.

The Man that Asked for Change

He was walking up to strangers asking for spare change.
But what do people see when they see him walking around alone
wearing nothing but rags?
Do they see the man that risked his life for us and our country?
Or do they see the drunk that talks to himself?
I don't know what you see but I do know what I see.
I see the man that's been through Hell and back,
the man that drinks just so he doesn't have to feel the pain he has endured,
the man that hides from shadows
just because he thinks they're his enemy coming to strike again,
the man that let fear ruin every relationship he has ever had,
the man that lost everyone and everything in his life
because of posttraumatic stress disorder,
a man that needs help.
He helped us by serving for our country.
Now what's so wrong with helping him,
by just giving him chump change you won't even use?
Help him find a way home.



Not All Superheroes

Not all superheroes show up in a disguise,
with powers like spider sense or even X-ray eyes.

Not all superheroes move at supersonic speed,
but regular superheroes get there when you're in need.

Not all superheroes are easily recognized,
but if you look closely they do materialize.

Not all superheroes are parents to a teen,
but my mother is my hero and also is my queen.

Not all super heroes use their voices to advise,
but my mother's voice is the sweetest when she speaks with her eyes.

Not all superheroes make a difference every day,
but my mother does by raising me to do right in every way.

Hypocrisy

Boys. Looking at me. Talking behind my back.
Girls. Adding fuel to the fire; talking smack.
There was a rumor going around the halls.
I felt like I was crushed between the walls.
School can be such a hate-filled place;
They'll talk about you but be nice to your face.
In the end you learn to be tough,
prepare for the real world: society is rough.

I Was Born

I was born in June of '99.
That was the day a miracle so fine
happened, 'cause, see, I couldn't breathe air.
They had to shock me twice in the delivery room; right there.
Since then I've lived in this tough city.
Times are tough; life isn't always pretty,
but I'll make it through, do what I want to do,
grow up to study psychiatry and make it into Who's Who.



JESSICA

Jessica is a Latina who was raised in Cleveland, Ohio. She not only loves writing poetry and stories, but she also loves to express herself through singing and creating her own music. She is very involved in extracurricular activities, including basketball, soccer (which she will tell you is the real football!), and numerous after-school clubs. Her dream is to earn a doctoral degree in forensic anthropology.

JESSICA



Jessica on Her Superheroes

*They may not be Wonder Woman,
but they're my Wonder Women!*

My mother is important to me because she's more than just a mom. She's my mom! She's so beautiful, and even through all the negativity she still manages to smile and stand strong. She sacrifices a lot when there are struggles, whether it's her food, or her shoes. She wears her old shoes in the snow so that we can have new boots. When she was sick and felt weak she still worked to maintain us and everything else. My mother is my Wonder Woman.

Poem: My Mami

My mami is my hero even though at times we disagree.
She kissed my boo-boos and made me feel pretty.
When she did my hair, she tied it so tight
that sometimes I felt like I looked like Bugzie, from Bedtime Stories!
Oh, and when I was hungry, she made sure that she fed me!
Pollo con limón y arroz con habichuela, always my favorite.
My mami keeps the roof over our heads and the food on our plates.
And trust me, when she cooks, everyone eats!
Even though there's five kids,
she tries her best to meet everyone's needs.
My mom tries hard to keep nice shoes on our feet!
And when the rough times stroll in, she makes sure we're taken care of.
When she cleans, she sings away.
She dances to the beat of her favorite singer, Mary J.
With the broom in her hand, she sweeps away.
I swear—when that beautiful woman cleans, she cleans and disinfects all day.
When you hear a beeping noise, and you see a smirk on her face, you know either
freshly baked cake, or cookies are on their way.
Her wardrobe is always full of black or dark colors,
a baggy shirt and sweatpants—her favorite after a busy day.
You brought her chocolate! She'd never hesitate.
My mom is so special in every way.
When I had very scary dreams, "Rocka My Baby" is what she sang.
When I was a baby, she'd sing "La Linda Manita" to me because it was my fave.
My mami is my hero because she taught me so much. To be strong
when times got tough,
to always smile when you're feeling down,
and if you truly want something, work hard for it.
My mom is such a strong woman, and if you really knew her, you'd say the same.
Such a beautiful person in and out.
When she's older I'm gonna take care of her like she did for me.
Why? Because, that's my mami!
And like she tells me, "I love you, in my heart always and forever."
She's my Wonder Woman.

My Abuelita

My abuelita is important to me because she lived long and taught me values only she can provide. She also kept my language alive.

If it weren't for her I would probably be a gringa! She was also very important because she was like a second mom to me. I remember when she'd blast salsa music or sing the songs from the novelas. She liked a lot of songs! While seasoning chuletas with adobo she'd sing to Marco Antonio Solis. While she cleaned she would place one hand on her stomach and dance to the beat, ignoring that her oxygen tank was plugged up, the smell of food always in the air.

Abuelita

My abuela is my hero even though she'd hit me on the head with the brush when I complained about how much it hurt when she brushed through my curls.

Her favorite words, "Callate llorona!"

She loved to dance to salsa.

Do not get me started on how much she watched novelas.

I remembered her favorites were *Betty La Fea* and *La Familia Peluche*

When I got injured, "Sana colita, sana colita-ja," would be her healing words.

Go to the store and dare to come back without an Almond Joy.

She'd break you like a toy!

If my tummy ached, she'd rub Vicks on it,
and make me sopa minuto.

She even showed me my dad's hidden stash of cash under the carpet.

Fried plantains were the best.

Hers would pass any test!

She's my hero because she was like my second mami.

If it weren't for her, I would have probably missed *Betty La Fea*.

Which aired at 7:30 on Novelas.

My Shoes

From running to jumping,
kicking and falling,
from racing to chasing and
walking, thank God my shoes didn't start talking!
My shoes watched me go for that rebound on the court,
run 10 laps, and field suicides.
They watched me kick them soccer balls:
they were the only ones who seen me almost fall.
My shoes been through it all.
They kept my feet warm, along with socks,
took the pain when I walked on rocks,
climbed hills, and hopped over puddles.
From running to jumping,
kicking and falling,
from racing to chasing and
walking. My shoes been through a lot.
...but they still aren't talking.





Childbirth

Do you ever wonder why we come out the womb?
Like, hey baby, the thing you came
out of isn't that pretty!

The only thing beautiful about giving birth
is you get your own mini you!

You get to nurture your child and provide
what he or she might need.

That smile they give you makes you
love them more.

You get to protect them and provide
information you've learned,
so when they are older they can be
wiser. Yes. Life starts to begin when you're
out of the womb.

You grow, learn, and love.

You can go from kindergarten to
valedictorian, all because your
parents made you,
and most of all they're there to love
and protect you. Coming through
and out of the womb may not be
pretty, but living and the moment you
open your eyes, and hit the cool air
and realize that's the beauty.

Places I Cherish

These are places I cherish:

When I was younger, I used to love going to the park with my grandmother.

In the summer at my grandma's house, we went into the backyard and made mud pies, and jumped on the trampoline.

When I hang out with friends, we find restaurants that we've never been to, or go to the movies.

Train Park was the always go-to park when I was younger.

Around 4th grade I lived near Roberto Clemente Park. I attended Walton Elementary.

Every day before going to school I would buy my lil brother and I something from the corner bakery. It usually was alcapurrias!

In 5th grade I attended Almira Elementary, there I was chosen to be a mediator.

I ended up leaving Almira and going back to Walton in 6th grade.

I started getting straight A's.

In 8th grade I went to Cedar Point for the very first time because of a field trip.

Streets that I know from the back of my hand:

Train, W 50th, Clark, and W 51st.

I know Train because of Train Park plus it's the go-to hidden street when you want to avoid traffic.

In 1st grade I attended Clark Elementary. My teacher's name was Mrs. Robot. Well, that's what I remembered calling her!

The go-to store was the store on 48th. They've known me for years!

Growing up, if there was no food my mother would invent something for us to eat.

My father, who I only saw on the weekends, used to take us on movie nights and to the park.

I remember the Kmart on W 65th Street. I loved going there especially with my grandma.

My grandma would always get the carts and race with me.

I was in love with the Bratz: I had Bratz chanclas that no longer fit. My mom and grandma threw them out and I cried for days. I had everything Bratz, the cartoon, dolls, and everything Bratz.

Walking on the streets I would always hold my guardian's hand because Honda racers sometimes showed up.

These are the places I cherish.

What I Learned From My Coach

Success Breeds Contempt,
an inspiring person told me once.
Success Breeds Contempt.
Who knew three words can mean so much?
I always remind myself,
when no respect is given,
to listen to those words of wisdom:
Success Breeds Contempt.
Those who treat you wrong
when you do a right,
those who put you down
when you are kind,
those who make you cry
when you were fine,
those who call you names
and laugh in your face—
stay strong, and inform yourself that
Success Breeds Contempt!
Success Breeds Contempt!



Unlimited High Speed?

We get it! High-speed data can run out fast. Add a line or two to your plan for just \$30/month and everyone gets 8 GB of high speed data.

But why? It doesn't even feel like it's been a month.

My pocket is crying, "Enough is enough."

My brain is whining, "Unlimited data girl! Just \$30. Not much."

My heart hurts after hearing my brain. Money is money that

I cannot waste. My greed gets me. Should I agree to

a \$30 a month plan, where everyone gets high speed?

My pocket is crying, "Enough is enough!"

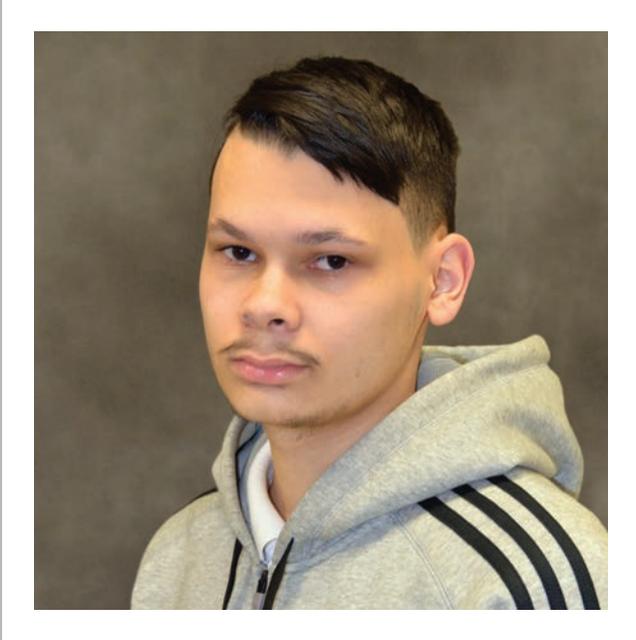
My data is enough.

No more bills for me, nope, not gonna let them kick my butt.

Oh well, 4 GB. I'm fine with that. No extra, get out of here!

You ain't robbing me!





ANTONIO

Antonio started writing after discovering slam poetry on YouTube one evening. He believes that poets are like rappers without a beat, and while he prefers not to talk much, he will gladly put his thoughts on paper. He likes to play sports, and he is a member of Lincoln-West's baseball team. Antonio plans on majoring in physical therapy in college.

ANTONIO

Who is your mother to you besides your mother? Your friend? A sister? Can you even describe who she is? I can't describe how much my mom means to me. I can't put what she has done for me into words. However, I can tell you who she is to me besides my mother. Not a friend, not like a sister, not a counselor, or a teacher. She's everything to me.

Heroes

Not all heroes wear capes.
My mom is a prime example:
She has super strength—
worked two jobs for years to keep us on our feet,
with clothes on at least, and food to digest while we sleep.
She got fired instead of promoted,
even though that's not what she was hoping, she kept grinding.
So, no, her arms might not be strong, but what is are her emotions.

Not all heroes wear capes.
My grandma proved that:
She's lost so much in little time;
most people wouldn't still be standing.
But she's strong like my mother.
They both can take some damage.
She's been there since I was born, so I'll be there 'til she dies.
Her superpower is being an angel:
she doesn't have the wings to fly,
not a halo above her head,
but she has love and virtue that can still fly above the rest.

Not all heroes wear capes.
My sisters show it,
They're heroes in their own way even though they don't know it.
Well, they're kind of sidekicks,
still learning the skills needed to be mastered.
They're learning the same as me,
from the two best heroes that can teach.
Their superpower, however, hasn't yet been revealed,
all they received so far is a shield.

I hold a sword in my brain;
they hold their shield for the pain.
My mother's emotion tank,
and my grandmother's angelic personality,
we all come together.
No Justice League,
no Avengers,
and surely no villain will rise above,
because nothing can stop the superpower of a family's love.

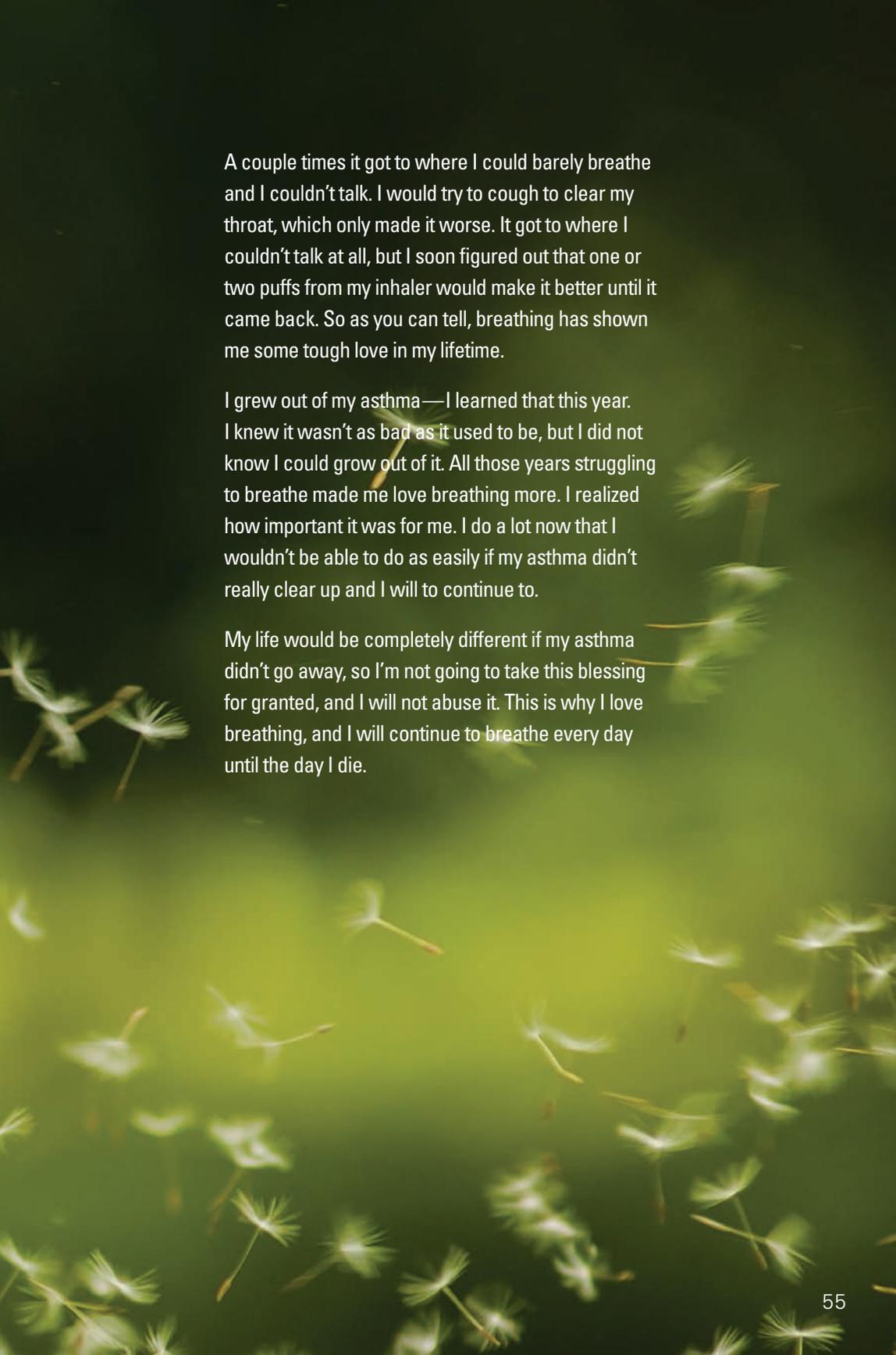
Breathing

I like to breathe.

There's just something about it. I always feel I have to do it, like if I didn't do it then I'd die. I tried not to breathe one time. It hurt a little and I couldn't keep my mind off it. I'm breathing right now as I write this. I never thought about how much I loved breathing until I thought about how much I breathe. I've become so accustomed to breathing that I even do it in my sleep. It's just amazing.

Breathing wasn't always smooth sailing for me. I used to have asthma. Key words are "used to." I used to have to use a nebulizer every night—man, was that boring. I used to have three inhalers: one at school, one for myself to take to school, and one at home. One time I had a bad asthma attack and I had to go to the emergency room. I couldn't stop coughing. I used the inhaler multiple times and it wouldn't work... So off to the emergency room it was. I calmed down about halfway there, but my mom still took me in to make sure everything was okay.





A couple times it got to where I could barely breathe and I couldn't talk. I would try to cough to clear my throat, which only made it worse. It got to where I couldn't talk at all, but I soon figured out that one or two puffs from my inhaler would make it better until it came back. So as you can tell, breathing has shown me some tough love in my lifetime.

I grew out of my asthma—I learned that this year. I knew it wasn't as bad as it used to be, but I did not know I could grow out of it. All those years struggling to breathe made me love breathing more. I realized how important it was for me. I do a lot now that I wouldn't be able to do as easily if my asthma didn't really clear up and I will to continue to.

My life would be completely different if my asthma didn't go away, so I'm not going to take this blessing for granted, and I will not abuse it. This is why I love breathing, and I will continue to breathe every day until the day I die.

The Little House

The little house on the prairie,
which housed Terry and Carey,
though a small house, they still love all the history it carries.
It housed historical figures such as Abraham Clooney and Gatey Harry,
or at least that's what the real estate agent told them,
and if you can't tell already
Terry and Carey aren't very bright.
However, they get through every day and every night.
But one day, Terry and Carey had a fight.
They argued how Terry said $1+1=3$, and Carey said he wasn't right.
She started thinking everything he said was a lie, because $1+1$ can't equal 3.
It has to equal five.
Because $2+2=4$. And 1 is more than 2, so $1+1$ must equal more.
Carey was so mad, she started slamming their only door,
yelling, "I hate you." Her words hit Terry like a truck,
stepping over him like he was muck.
That's when Terry fired back and yelled "I don't give a...way bad words because my
momma raised me right.
But keep yelling like that, and I just might."
He then said, "Look it up on Google."
She asked how to spell it.
"G-O-O-G-O-O."
She typed it, but nothing came up.
"Wow, Terry, here you go again with the lies."

She ran out the door with tears in her eyes.
She sat outside and began to cry.
While Terry sat inside he started trying to figure out his wife's state of mind.
"1+1 has to be three."
He decided to use an old math trick.
He put his hand up
and counted one, two times:
"One, two."
He yelled outside to his wife, and said "I got it honey.
1+1=1."
"Terry, you said 1+1=3. Now you're saying 1. You're really confusing me."
He told her count one on her fingers two times.
She did, only to find:
"Terry, that was two."
He said, "Yeah, but when I did it again, I used me and you.
We are one,
not separate.
Never could be.
Even when I said '1+1=3,'
you were still here with me."
As you can tell, Terry started to get pretty deep.
That's when Carey started to weep,
and Terry dropped to one knee.
And the rest, well you can guess.
He said, "Will you marry me?"
The little house on the prairie,
that little house houses Terry and Carey,
who now and forever will be happily married.



TERRANCE

Terrance has lived on both the East Side and the West Side of Cleveland. He is a well-rounded student and athlete who plays football and basketball for Lincoln-West High School. After graduating he wants to attend college in a major city like Chicago and study architectural engineering.

TERRANCE



The Text

The text read, “7 am tomorrow, we have a LONG trip to take.” “LONG trip! What exactly does he mean by long trip?” I thought as I blankly stared at the message on my brightly powered screen. “7 am, though,” I thought, grunting at the thought of waking up super early. I’m really not a morning person. “I barely like waking up for school!” I said to myself.

I knew I had to wake up extra early the next morning. I still showed total disregard for this “LONG trip” that we had to take. Later that night I stayed up all night stuffing my face with various snacks and foods—Doritos, Twizzlers, Gummie Bears, pretty much anything that was edible that I could get my hands on!

Waking up the next morning was one of the worst and hardest things to do. I could barely keep my eyes open. Showering and brushing my teeth were the most difficult tasks ever.

Dropped Interception

“Down set!” the opposing quarterback yelled, getting his team ready for the next play. “Mark your MAN!” our coach yelled from the sideline as he caressed his shiny bald scalp. “Aye! Aye! I got doubles! I got doubles!” I repeatedly yelled until Cortez shifted over to assist me. Just then, a moment of silence fell on the field. We all were staring at each other, ready for the play to move into action.

“Hit!” the quarterback yelled, chasing around and trying to stop the receiver from getting past me. I felt a tight clinch in my feet with every step I took as I was pursuing him.

“Ball, ball, ball!” he yelled, trying to escape my tight grasp of his jersey. I turned to see the ball spiraling towards me. “I got it! I got it!” I yelled, jumping high into the air. Everything stopped as the ball touched my hands, one with a glove and the other gloveless and taped up. Coming down from the air, tip, tip, tip.



My Shoes: What Do They Tell About Me?

Shoes...are meant to show a sense of style and fashion.

They show that I care about how I look.

They show I care to keep them clean.

My favorite color of shoes is black.

They can also make you stand out in a crowd...Some styles of shoes make you look different from people. They can be normal or abnormal.

My shoes, my cleats,
the tight hold of the laces as they clinch my feet,
they help me pursue the ball carrier.

The mud from the hard raining games that we've played,
the deep creases that make them curl up,
they curl because of all of the running I do.

They might be just shoes to you,
but they tell a story to me!

What kind of story do your shoes tell about you?

The holes in the ground they make after every play!

Every Saturday & Friday, they show that I DON'T
Quit! DON'T stop until the final whistle.

The deep, skunky, odor fills my nose as I remove them from my feet
tells that I've been working hard all day.

They might just be shoes to you,
but they tell a story to ME!

What kind of story do your shoes tell
about you?

The rip of the leather around the tip & back of my feet
shows where I've been stepped on.

The scratches show my willingness
to fight.

They carry a lot of losses and wins,
touchdowns, penalties, tackles, and hard work.

A few things that these shoes show:
the worn-out sole on the inside of the shoe
tells how much I love to wear them.

I wear them so much that it's starting to tear.

From the 1st quarter to the 4th quarter,
these shoes are really worn out!

Some people are even telling me I need a new pair,
but I don't care!

They might just be shoes to you!

BUT they tell a story to **ME!**

What kind of story do your shoes tell about **YOU?**



FRANCIS

Francis was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio. Dedicated to both boxing and track, he can be found training after school on most days. He is interested in professional boxing and a career in financial analysis. His dream is to become an Olympic boxer so that he can represent his hometown to the world.

FRANCIS

Superheroes

When we think of superheroes, we think of “Marvel or DC?” “Spider-Man or Superman?” My superheroes do not have the ability to shoot laser beams out their eyes or spider webs out their wrist. My superheroes have real-life powers.

My superhero Number One is my baby brother. My baby brother’s smile is the reason why I work so hard, the reason why I give any and everything my best. I want him to keep that smile. I will be my baby brother’s real-life angel. My superhero Number Two and Three are my parents. For my whole life, I’ve seen my parents go through the struggle of not having enough money, but some way, somehow they’ve always found a way for me and my siblings to get by.

A Story Inspired By The Cleveland Museum of Art

Henry didn't know what he wanted to be when he got older, Henry said he wanted to be every fairy tale in the book. Henry wanted to be a god—a mighty warrior of this here world, one who has lightning flowing through his veins. This god was unstoppable.

What Henry didn't know was that none of this stuff from fairy tales was true. When Henry found out, he was disappointed. He soon got over it and chose a more realistic dream. Henry wanted to be a man that could communicate with all animals: the one man who could have all animals put their differences aside and obey rules.

Henry didn't know where to start, so he wondered and wondered until he bumped into a talking bird who said, "Watch out for the king of the jungle. He is a lion, maybe a gorilla." Right then and there, Henry knew what he had to do.

Henry went out and searched out every cave spot in the jungle. He killed every animal his weight. Soon he got the King's attention and was challenged to a battle. Henry killed the King. Every animal bowed to Henry. Henry disappeared after all the work he did. He returned with a mask made of the skin of every animal that he had killed. He wore it proudly, reminding them that he was a god, a warrior on this here earth.



ANTHONY (GIO)

Gio is a junior at Lincoln-West High School. He loves sports, especially basketball, and he was named MVP of the Lincoln-West basketball team for the 2017 season. He has a large family with many siblings, and he loves to talk about all his nieces and nephews. He is interested in a software engineering career.



GIO

Somewhere in America

All around America
there is a kidnapping going on every 15 seconds
but those who don't get kidnapped,
don't care,
won't ever care,
until it happens to one of their loved ones,
or a very close friend.
Somewhere in America
there are innocent people getting killed
for just walking in a neighborhood
because they weren't raised in that neighborhood.



The day I learned how to ride a bike

The day I learned how to ride a bike was fun. I fell a couple times. I was two years old and it was a hot sunny day. Everyone knew how to ride a bike except for me, since I was the youngest. I learned how to ride a bike last. My parents and all of my brothers were outside ready to teach me. So they put me on the bike and they walked with me a couple times until they thought I had the hang of it. When my first try came I rode about 15 feet before tipping over. Then my second try came and I thought I had they hang of it, before it was time to turn. That's when I fell on some grass. I tried again, knowing for sure I had the balance to ride straight, but that the turning messed me up.

A grayscale photograph of a brick building with the name 'LINCOLN-WEST HIGH SCHOOL' mounted on the wall in large, raised, dark letters. The building has a curved facade and a small square light fixture is visible above the letters. The background is a plain, light gray.

LINCOLN-WEST HIGH SCHOOL

COLLABORATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

Jessica

Antonio

Terrance

Ivory

Deepak

Red, White and Blue

Lincoln-West is a place where
you're locked down on the first floor
with old books and computers.

When you walk through these doors, you see
many different faces and cultures.

When you sit down in class, keep a close
eye on the instructions or you'll be 2 weeks
behind just by missing two minutes.

When you walk the hallway, you see different kinds of people:
happy ones, sad ones, stressed ones, romantic ones,
and the worst ones.

The weirdest part is how everyone says they're
the best at a sport, but I haven't
seen a championship in a while.

When the bell rings you feel
joy blast within you,
relief that the day is done.

When you walk through these doors,
the cold air from outside doesn't seem
to fade away.

When you sit down in class, you might not
feel very welcomed.

When you walk the halls, be cautious.
You don't know what you could step on or worse,
who you could bump into.

The weirdest part is you see the security guard's smile
every single day.

When the bell rings at the end
of the day, you don't got to go
home, but you can't stay here.

Lincoln-West is a place where most people
are not expected to succeed.

When you sit down in class you feel the journey
of the day is long.

The weirdest part is when you walk
into the bathroom and you see
a group of students that just turn
their heads and stare. Evacuate!

When the bell rings at the end of the day,
students and some teachers are dying to get out!

Lincoln-West is a place where the teachers
ban headphones and lie about you ever
turning in your work.

When you walk through these doors, you'll see crowds
full of noise.

When you sit down in class you might
learn, but then you might not!
Don't fool around kids.

When you walk the halls you feel like
they're expanding.

The weirdest part is that some people actually enjoy
showing up to this place...most of the time I
don't even consider it a school.

Lincoln-West is a place full of strangers,
a bunch of fellows, a bunch of great people,
a bunch of losers, a bunch of hard workers.
When you walk through these doors you're greeted
with a fist bump.

When you sit down in class,
you feel like your eyes are going
to shut, but you have to listen 'cause there's
a quiz.

When you walk the halls you might see a fight or
two...maybe even a few.

When the bell rings, we all sprint for the
exit because Hell is too hot to endure further.

Lincoln-West has its ways
where you feel locked down,
but it's like our second home.
Our friends are our substituted
family, just for the day.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The student authors wrote this book. Many people made it possible.

Esperanza, Inc. exemplifies hope by working to improve educational opportunities for Hispanic students throughout Greater Cleveland and recognizing their academic achievements with scholarships. Local high school graduation rates of Hispanic youth have more than doubled in recent years thanks in large part to the strong partnership between Esperanza and the Cleveland Municipal School District. Executive Director Victor Ruiz and Lincoln West Site Coordinator Michael Cook connected us with the amazing students from Lincoln West High School.

Lake Erie Ink provides creative expression opportunities and academic support to youth in the Greater Cleveland community. Amy Rosenbluth, Cordelia Eddy, and Damien Ware provided the writing instruction that helped transition our student authors' thoughts to their written words.

"Meet me in Louisville," said my Cleveland Fed colleague Mary Helen Petrus in the fall of 2015. Mary Helen introduced me to this project, and The Louisville Story Program team generously informed and inspired our work throughout this incredible adventure.

Brittany Harris helped coordinate the Fed Scholars' summer at the Cleveland Fed. She and Anne O'Shaughnessy worked with the student authors and ensured they felt part of our Cleveland Fed family. Michael Galka served as art director and photography coach for this book. Editor Heather Ann provided valuable feedback, and Matt Klesta contributed the community analysis you will find at the end of this book. Jennifer Ransom manages the Cleveland Fed's Education and Museum Outreach Department. The more the students shared their stories, the more quickly this program became one of her favorites.

Kathleen Murphy is a member of our Bank's Education and Museum Outreach team. During the past year, she was much more than the student authors' project leader; by creating a safe, welcoming space for the students to share their stories, she became their champion and trusted confidante. This project would not have been possible without her.

This book and the stories within were informed by many of my Cleveland Fed colleagues and a host of other community partners, including the Cleveland Municipal School District, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Public Library, Literary Cleveland, and—most of all—the city of Cleveland itself.

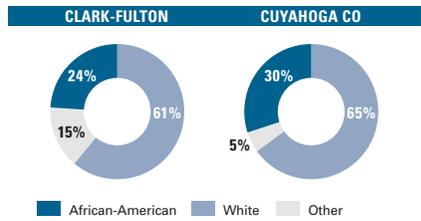
For more information about the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, the Fed Scholar program, or for tips on how to begin a community story project, visit clevelandfed.org/learningcenter.

Kelly Banks
Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland
2017

NEIGHBORHOOD SNAPSHOT: CLARK-FULTON



DEMOGRAPHICS

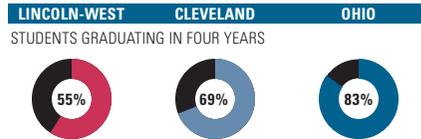
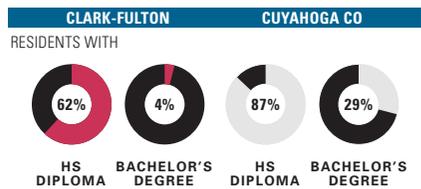


EDUCATION

Graduation rates in the Clark-Fulton neighborhood are lower than in Cleveland as a whole, but the share of the population 25+ years old who completed high school has risen from 48 percent (2000) to 72 percent (2012).

The four-year graduation rate for students attending Lincoln-West High School is 55 percent. Of the 2013 graduating class, 28 percent entered college within two years. Of the 2009 graduates that went on to college, 7 percent graduated within six years.

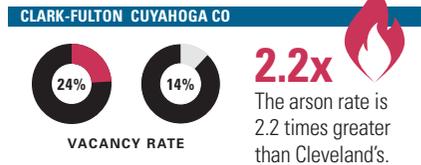
GRADUATION RATES



PROPERTY

The housing stock is old; 75 percent of homes were built before 1940. The share of owner-occupied units has declined from 40 percent (2000) to 28 percent (2012). At the same time, vacant units have doubled since 2000. In 2012, nearly a quarter of all units were vacant.

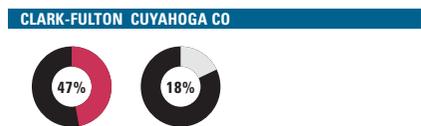
HOUSING



SOCIAL DISTRESS

The poverty rate in Clark-Fulton is 2.6 times greater than in Cuyahoga County, with a median household income of \$21,345. Sixty percent of Clark-Fulton households receive SNAP benefits, 1.4 times greater than Cleveland households.

POVERTY RATE



CRIME

While Clark-Fulton's property crime rate is only slightly higher than Cleveland's, its violent crime rate is 1.4 times greater. Its juvenile delinquency rate is less than the city average. Clark-Fulton delinquency offenses per 1,000 youth was 38 in 2015 and for the city of Cleveland it was 56.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY



Sources: Case Western Reserve University (Northeast Ohio Community and Neighborhood Data for Organizing) and Ohio Department of Education.

