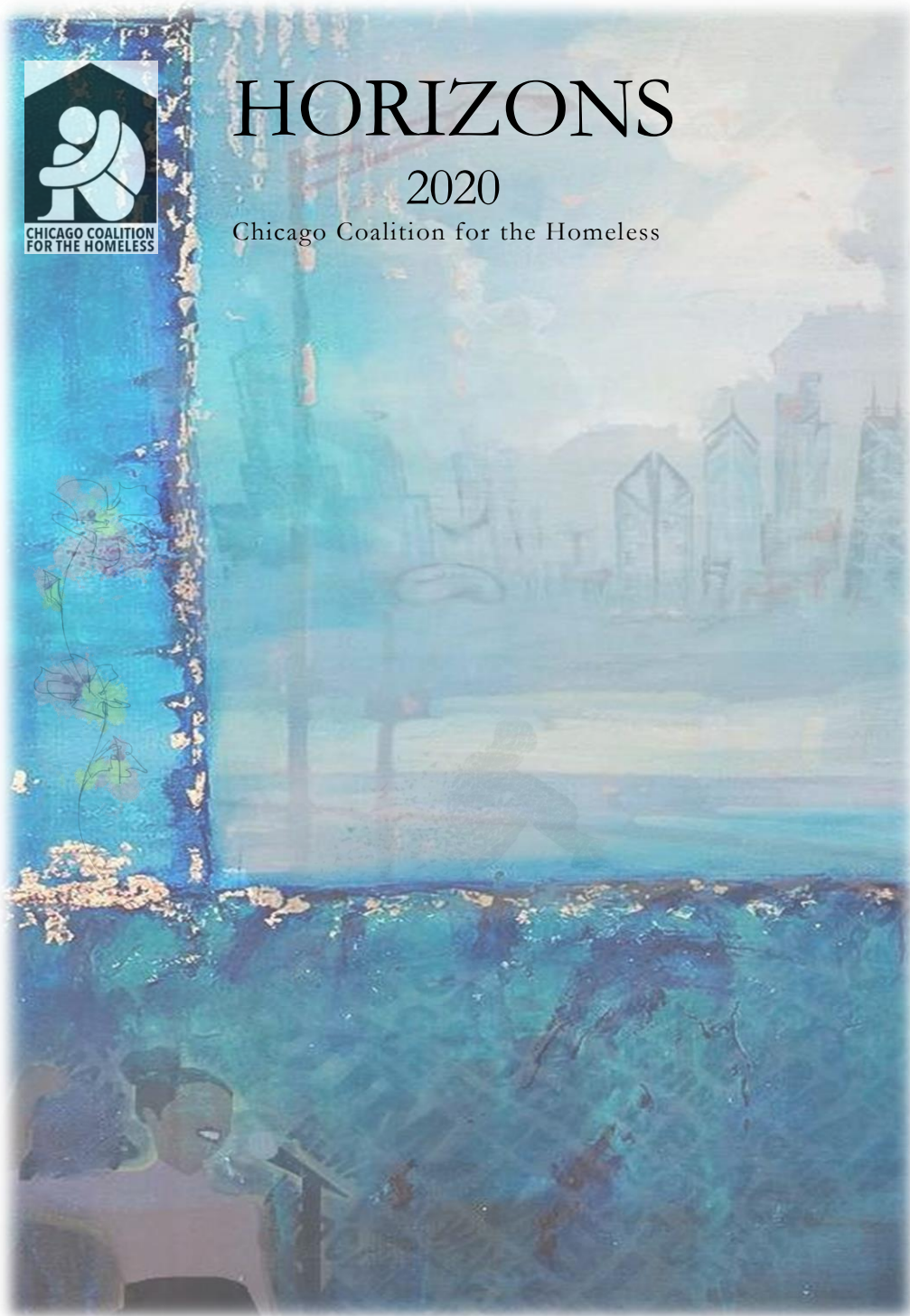


HORIZONS

2020

Chicago Coalition for the Homeless



HORIZONS

2020

MISSION STATEMENT

Horizons is a creative writing workshop program dedicated to helping participants find their creative voices through poetry, expressive writing, and storytelling. Horizons seeks to break down the barriers that often exist between people by bringing them together to explore each other's perspectives. Horizons is about empowerment—both for its writers and those experiencing their work.

Horizons offers creative writing classes twice a month at several transitional shelters and supportive living programs within the Chicagoland area

HORIZONS

2020

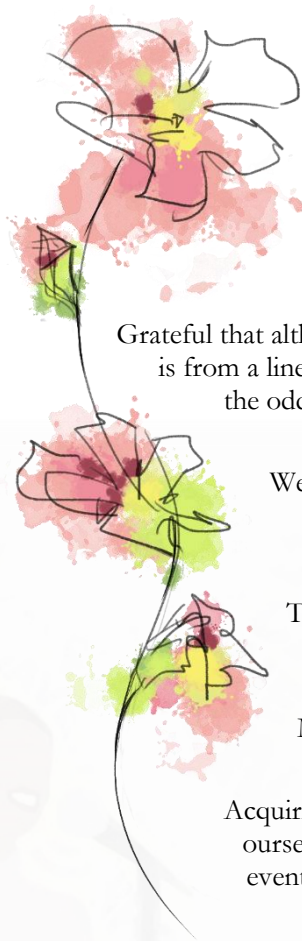
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August 2020

Our Plight

by Willette Benford



Life has a way of happening to us, when
we look up, it has happened to us all....

I am grateful there are those who know,
believe, and will change what has
happened....

Mere acceptance with no fight seems
as if someone is speaking a foreign
language....

Grateful that although life has often happened, our descent
is from a lineage of fighters which have chosen to defy
the odds considered the norm for those who life
happens to....

We simply give voice to many who have lived
and are living our lives.... silently....

What a travesty to cease speaking....

Think of the lives spared through our voice,
and the numerous ones lost through
silence....

Many have past regrets but have chosen to
vacate the premises....

Acquiring along the way life lessons, not only for
ourselves, but those precious lives we would
eventually affect when we truly, truly, connect

A Poem of Substance

by Kevin Reynolds

Today I fell the North Wind a'blowin cross my face.
I say, "Today I felt the cool North Wind, a'blowing cross my face."

And I's mighty truly grateful, cause I know I won this race.

You

see, White boy down there was good
to me, but he drove a brotha
man.

White girl down there
was so damn sweet, that
she owned a nigga man

Got so tired of them there
"White Folks" that I's finally
upped and ran.

I knowed my life was wuthless less found a
god.

I say "I knowed my life weren't worth a shiny piece of penny copper" lest I turned
my eyes to God.

Now when I see them white folks' I don't even stop to nod.

Today I felt the North Wind a'blowin cross my face.

I say, "Today I felt the cool North Wind of Freedom, a'blowin cross my face.

And I's mighty, truly grateful. Cause I know I won this race.

Bring Chicago Home

by Juanita Rodgers

As I walk along the city streets,
I see people who just want to eat and sleep.
People who just want a chance.
To live in a home without strict demands.
People who have somehow have become lost,
In a system, systematically designed to fail without any cost.
People who are human like you and me.
People who just want to be free.
These are our people who are just looking for help.
Yet, the doors are still closing because of greed and wealth.
Blaming these people for the situation that they are in.
Telling these people that they do not stand a chance.
So why is so hard to get these people off the street's
Because it does not affect you or even me.
We don't think about their heartaches and pain
Until something happens to us to force us to stand out in the rain.
So, who are we to judge these people we see shaking their cans?
Well, it's time for us to make these demands!
It's time for us to take a stance!
It's time for us to push our politicians!
It's time for us to make them listen!
So, are you just going to keep walking by?
Shed a tear or maybe even cry?
It's time out for that because they don't stand alone
It's Time for Us to Bring Chicago Home!

I CRY, I CRY, I CRY

by Margaret Bingham

I miss my Mom-
Every time her birthday comes along
I CRY, I CRY, I CRY
Until I cannot cry no more.
She is safe place now-
No more pain, No more aches, No more hurt
She was everything I needed!

I miss my grandmother-
I Miss her Gospel songs, watching her soap operas
Her sweet potatoes pies and her warm hugs.
I CRY, I CRY, I CRY
She was my friend, she was my father, she is my Strength!!

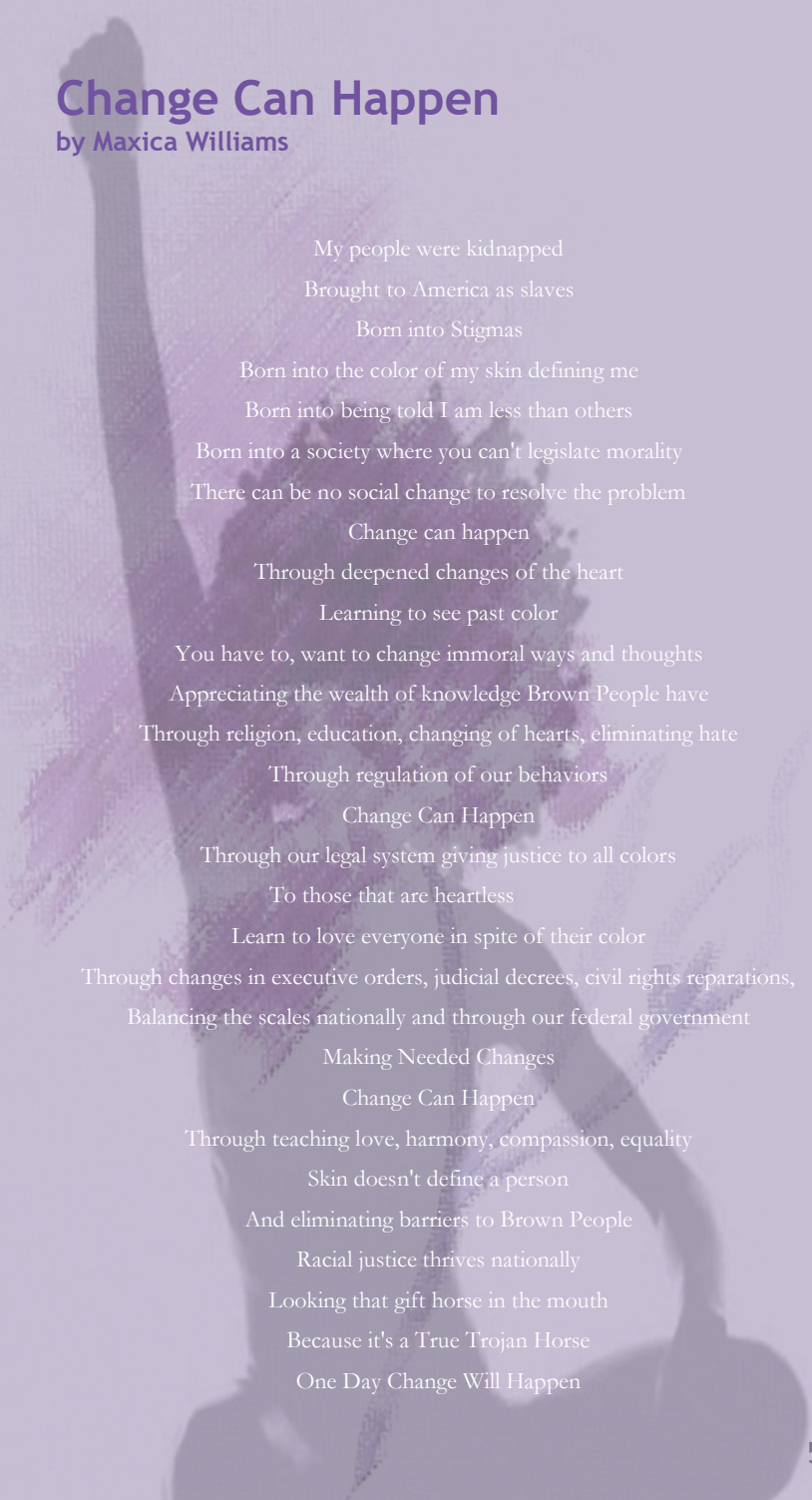
I miss my brother-
He cared for me
He cared for my baby Mariah
He was a good man; He was a good brother!
I CRY, I CRY, I CRY
He is loved, he is remembered, he is everywhere!

I Love my daughter Mariah-
I am proud of her hard work
I am proud of her A honor roll grades
But most of all – I am proud of her kind heart
I CRY, I CRY, I CRY
Mariah makes me cry tears of joy.

I love all my children
Especially my middle daughter Nelly
I can call her
Because she's shown me it's okay to cry
She will ask me
"Are you okay momma?"
And I answer—
Yes, it's okay to cry!

Change Can Happen

by Maxica Williams



My people were kidnapped
Brought to America as slaves
Born into Stigmas
Born into the color of my skin defining me
Born into being told I am less than others
Born into a society where you can't legislate morality
There can be no social change to resolve the problem
Change can happen
Through deepened changes of the heart
Learning to see past color
You have to, want to change immoral ways and thoughts
Appreciating the wealth of knowledge Brown People have
Through religion, education, changing of hearts, eliminating hate
Through regulation of our behaviors
Change Can Happen
Through our legal system giving justice to all colors
To those that are heartless
Learn to love everyone in spite of their color
Through changes in executive orders, judicial decrees, civil rights reparations,
Balancing the scales nationally and through our federal government
Making Needed Changes
Change Can Happen
Through teaching love, harmony, compassion, equality
Skin doesn't define a person
And eliminating barriers to Brown People
Racial justice thrives nationally
Looking that gift horse in the mouth
Because it's a True Trojan Horse
One Day Change Will Happen

You Can't See Me

by DeNaysa Williams

America, known as the Land of the Free

I'm American, but I'm not free

You see I'm enslaved by society

It hurts so deep inside of me

I'm a child, but I still have a say in my Freedom

Straight A student

My grades don't matter to you

You only see my skin color

Beautiful Brown Princess

You only see my color

I behave and do what my parents and society expect of me

But I'm still walking around with a target on my back

Because society only sees MY Brown Skin Color

You Can't See Me

A Big Sister

That teaches her siblings through example

You Can't see Me

Making my ancestor's proud

Paying Honor to me being able to go to school

To get an education

In the back of my mind, my ancestor's enslaved and not allowed to get an education

You Can't See Me

Learned Hate, Taught Destruction of Brown People

That were taken from their lands and brought here against their will

You Can't See Me

All You See is My Brown Skin

by DeSera Williams

I have the right to walk down the street

I have the right to play in a playground

I have the right to be Me

I have the right to live my life

I have the right to be free

I'm full of joy

But my mind isn't at ease

Beautiful Brown Princess

I keep my crown straight

I'm funny, smart, follow the rules, and I'm a natural

communicator

But you don't know that

Because you already judged me

All you see is my Brown Skin Color

You Can't See Me

Brown Boy in America

by DeVon Williams

I shouldn't have to worry
If Every time I go Outside
If I will make it home
I love my Mom
She hugs me as I leave out the door
Deep down, My Mom is fearing for me her child
A Brown Prince in America
I can see the hurt and pain in her eyes
I go to school and I'm an honor student
I do all I can to stay on the right path
Living in this cold world, Filled with hate
A Brown Boy with a target on his back every day
A boy that worries and fears if he will make it to
be a man one day
A child thrust into adult situations
My Brown Brothers I know your pain
One day we will be equal, and more than our
Brown Skin will be unveiled
I pray for change for my Brown People

What's Next?

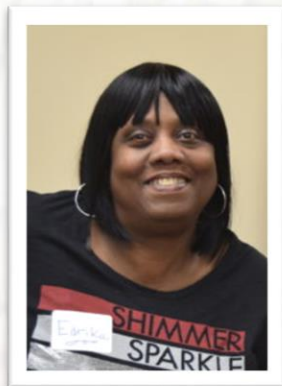
By Juanita Rodgers

Now you see why it is important,
To push our politicians
So, they can't ignore this.
Bring Chicago Home is not just a need,
but a responsibility,
When you shut down the city,
What about these people,
When you burn down the city,
What about these people,
When You build up the city,
What about these people.
And When the sun is back up,
What about these people.
Those are the ones who are going
in stores, after it has been looted,
Trying to find enough food before,
They start shooting.
Those are the ones
you'll find in the stores shopping.
Getting all, they can grab,
before the bombs start dropping.
Those are the ones being robbed and murdered
Because no one cares that they too are hurting,
So, I ask you again what do you plan to do?
Putting them in Hotels,
but is this Pandemic really through?
Now we all have to wear a mask on our faces.
But what about the Homeless
When the city has gone crazy.
Did you see that their homes were?
burnt down as well,
Did You see that their free meals?
are now going, elsewhere?
I think it's time to really "Level Up."
And end the population
of the homeless and those double up.
And Targeting the right people
from the top to the bottom will end the
the bottom to the up.



CHICAGO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

MASTER OF CEREMONY
Edrika Fulford



PROGRAM LEADER
Claudia Cabrera

