

# Bessie Rhodes Student Stories for *Visions of Life* Exhibit

Skokie Public Library  
Nov 2 - Dec 20, 2022



Contaminating the Innocent  
by Bruno Surdo

# Paintings with Stories

1. Mars
  - Oompaville
  - Putting Stonehenge on Mars
2. Robotic Security Guards
3. Chicago Rogers Park
  - Flashback
  - Leaving Rogers Park
4. Clarksdale, MS
5. Girl with a Violin
6. Piazza San Marco
7. The Weaver
8. Irish Man
9. Three Peaches and a Knife
  - Evidence
  - My Mindset
10. Fisherman of Mola di Bari
11. Growing Up
12. Zampha of Nigeria
13. Contaminating the Innocent

# Participating Writers

**Dr. Bessie Rhodes School of Global Studies**  
**Ms. Megan Berry's 6th Grade Class**

Bethany - Evidence

Bethany - Flashback

David

Deja

Genesis

Isabelle

King

Omar

Trustin

## 1. Mars



### **Oompaville**

By King

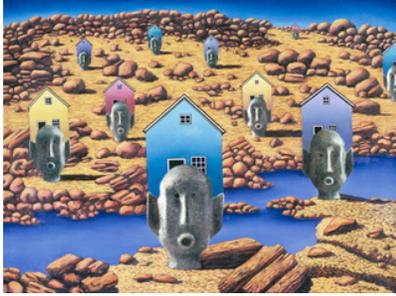
We live in a village of small homes, parks, animals, and people who are called Oompa Loompa. The village is called Oompa Loompa town, but the villagers call it Oompaville.

There is a king in Oompaville, and his name is Loompa.

He says that there will be a war called the Great War of Small and Big People. No one believes him because no one knows that the village is in a forest up in the trees.

The good thing about this village is that we always get free stuff, like the huge bell that is hung from a couple of trees. We built a treehouse once. It was easy since we already had some trees that were cut down.

## 1. Mars



### **Putting Stonehenge on Mars**

By Trustin

It was the year 1990 and back in my day, we didn't have spaceships until I said a famous statement that moved the hearts of hundreds of souls.

I said, "These asteroids and moon rocks can break your bones but Mars powder can never hurt you!

People heard that statement I said, and I declared, "Bring the astronauts. Bring the courts. Bring the army. Bring the ships. Bring everyone." And I said, "Holy Spirit Activate! We will go to Mars. We will build a city greater than all those amongst us on this planet today. On this very day, we will make Stonehenge on Mars!!!"

My speech moved the hearts, minds and souls of millions. I was proud of my country. I started getting ready for the big trip to put Stonehenge on Mars and when the time came, we went there. The rockets were ready. Everyone was ready, and I was ready. I would make my mark by putting Stonehenge on Mars.

### 3. Chicago Rogers Park



#### Flashback

By Bethany

I can't believe it's been 10 years since I last saw her. Ten years ago today, I was by her side holding her hand while watching her die.

"Please don't leave me, mom," I cried. "I can't live without you, please."

"It's ok, you're ok, sweetie. You will be fine." My mom tried calming me, but it didn't work.

My mom worked in the World Trade Center. I was only 10 years old when they called my father, telling him that my mother was injured during the attack.

I just couldn't believe it. I wanted the terrorists dead, I wanted them to feel the pain I felt when I lost her. I know I shouldn't be thinking about these things, but they took her away from me. I can't just leave and let that go like nothing happened.

"No," I cried again as they took me away from her. My father was in the corner and I saw tears in his eyes. They took her away and since she died, a piece of my heart died with her.

I shook the thoughts away and just focused on driving. I got my license this year so I don't need to be dropped off at her grave anymore.

I went to her grave and didn't see anyone. Thank God for that because in all honesty, I'm not really much of an extrovert. If I had a choice, I would be cocooned in my shell all day long.

It's been 2 hours and I'm just talking to her like she hears me. I mean I hope she does. Somewhere in heaven, maybe she can hear me.

I'm just playing with the pedals on the flowers I placed on her grave earlier when I heard someone coming.

"Is that your mom?" she said, referring to the picture on the grave. Who does that — just comes up to someone while they're grieving a dead relative. Weird girl.

"Uh, yeah," I replied. "Who did you come to see?"

"My aunt," she said. "She didn't have children but she was practically my second mom. she died 10 years ago today."

"Wait, so—" I tried speaking but got cut off.

"Yeah, she worked at the World Trade Center," she said. "What about your mom?"

"Same," I replied. There was silence until she spoke again.

"I'm Juliette," she said, holding out her hand.

"Adaleine," I said, shaking her hand.

"How long have you been here?"

"About 2 hours," I replied. I'm pretty sure she asked because I had an empty Olive Garden leftover container, one in my bag and one next to it like I was putting it away. "I was just leaving though, do you need a ride?"

"Yes, actually," she said, grateful.

Ever since that day we have been inseparable. She enrolled in my school and we would go to the library almost everyday to study or to just read books, but I'm glad I'm not alone anymore.

### 3. Chicago Rogers Park



#### **Leaving Rogers Park**

By David

There is a kid named Jordan Jackson. He likes basketball. He is from Roger Park in Chicago, Illinois. He is a good li'l boy. He gets good grades. Sweet kid. He would go to the gym to practice playing basketball.

Him and his mom don't have a lot of money. He wants to grow up and give his mom a big house and cars. His mom is a single mom. His dad left him when he was 5. He lives in a big neighborhood and his friends are named Shawn, Josh, and Damian.

The neighborhood is beautiful and has a lot of houses. He is scared because there is a shooting in his neighborhood. He wants to move. They are bad people in his neighborhood that steals stuff. His mom is tired of it, and she is trying to leave Roger Park.

## 8. Irish Man



### **The Cafe**

By Deja

So there once was an Irish man. He loved the cafe that was down the street from his apartment. He would go to this cafe every morning to go get a cup of coffee and a bagel or doughnut.

One morning he walked down to the cafe and everything was normal. Except when he got to the cafe, no one was there and he couldn't go in because the door was locked.

He assumed he was just early and that he had to wait until the cafe opened. The Irish man sat on the bench in front of the cafe and waited.

A random lady suddenly came up to him and said, "Are you waiting for someone?"

The Irish man said, "No, but I am waiting for this cafe to open up."

"Oh, I'm sorry to tell you this, but they have shut this cafe down completely." The woman said with a smile on her face.

"Oh okay, thank you for telling me," the Irish man said.

"No problem," she said happily and walked away.

The Irish man was very disappointed that the cafe was shut down. He was on his way to walk back home when he saw this huge sign that reads !!NEW CAFE OPENING TOMORROW!!.

The disappointment on his face disappeared and he became happy again. After that, he would come to that cafe every morning just like he would with the cafe he originally went to. The Irish man loved the cafe, but it was never as good as the old one.

## 9. Three Peaches and a Knife on a Napkin



### **Evidence** by Bethany

I was waiting for someone at the park bench. Well, not just anyone. My boss said she has an assignment. I don't know why I trust her. I haven't even seen her face. I mean, it was my choice to do this, but I was short on money and had no other choice.

She came to me and slid me one of those big yellow envelopes. "Get it done by Friday, or else..."

She seemed mad. I opened the envelope and saw a picture of three girls, but it looked like the fourth one is ripped from the picture at the end, so I couldn't see her face.

"Where is the other gi—"

"Just get it done!" I couldn't even finish before she cut me off. I think this is a bit personal. I did not want to get yelled at, so I just left.

These girls go to my school so I could just befriend them.

"Hey, I saw you guys and wanted to stop by and say hi. Um, would you like to work with me on the project?"

"Sure." They all said at the same time.

"Ok great! Thursday, Warren Park, 5:00. We can have a picnic and work on the project."

"Ok, sounds good."

"Ok."

"Alright."

They all agreed. This is way easier than I thought. Some people really don't think things through. It's been 2 days now and I'm getting my stuff ready for the picnic. I didn't really try on my outfit because it's not like I will see them again anyway.

I got the stuff ready and I saw them coming from the corner of my eye.

"Hey," they all said.

"Hey." I figured out their names when I got their numbers. "I was just getting the stuff ready."

"Ok," Emily said as they pulled out their books.

"Here, have some." I pulled out a basket full of fruit.

They all took a peach and got their laptops for the project. I had to hurry. I looked around to see if anyone was watching no one. I got my knife and aimed for Emily first and got her. She was annoying, but the others stared at me in horror.

"Y-you just k-killed her," the brunette said, stuttering.

I never liked when people stuttered. I aimed for her chest next and flung the knife. I didn't even let the other girl speak before I got my knife and got her. It was done.

I was getting rid of the bodies when I heard someone run. I just got caught. I ran after them just to find my brother. I can't believe it, but he got away.

I was in the courtroom in a trial against my brother. He used the 3 peaches and the knife as evidence, and I got sentenced for life. Gosh, my brother was so annoying. The guards were taking me to my cell. Oh well, people are so annoying.

## 9. Three Peaches and a Knife on a Napkin



### **My Mindset**

By Omar

As the trees blew,  
As the water flew,  
My heart stopped,  
And my body dropped.  
I looked up.  
I seen some peaches and said yup.  
My knife bend,  
As I felt wind.

I cried because I couldn't make it.  
But I realized I had to fake it.  
Fake it till you make it.  
That's what they say, right?  
I thanked my mindset as I took a bite.

But before I knew it, it was night.  
The trees went to sleep  
And I went where I needed to be.

## 11. Growing Up



### Royalty

By Isabelle

I can't help but think about how Samantha told me yesterday she was having a baby. AT 15! I am about to turn 15 in a day. I am just not maturing fast enough because I don't know about you, but 15 is young.

Hi, my name is Violet and I'm now 14 and I have 11 sisters. I am the youngest of all of my sisters, and we are royalty so we have to live in the same place FOREVER. It's wayyyyy too chaotic with all of my siblings. All they care about is money, makeup and their husbands. I know it's so lame. All I care about is me, myself and I. I love and hate being royalty.

Being royalty isn't as good as it might seem. It's horrible. ALL of my sisters have husbands who were picked by my parents, and I would have to marry a stranger just like them when I turn 16. I made a deal with them that if they pick who I marry, it's NOT at 15. There are guards everywhere you look and I get treated like a baby, which I am not at all. My parents won't even let me go to school because they are so scared of me getting hurt or something like that, but there is one thing I love about being royal. I get to wish for anything on my 15th birthday, which is tomorrow and I know the thing to wish for is to go to a public high school! Being royal means home school and etiquette classes. They suck, and I would love to make new friends, I never had one before. I can't wait for tomorrow to go to a new school anddddddd...

\* \* \*

It's my birthday! I am 15 years old and it's the day I get my wish! I am having a party today, a really big one just like my other sisters. Getting ready for my birthday party took like 3 hours. I'm not even exaggerating, and if you know me, I hate getting all fancy like my sisters. Once everyone was ready, it was time for me to walk down to the ballroom. First my sisters walked in and then everyone stopped talking at the same time as I walked in. I felt like a real princess and as I walked to my parents, I had people staring at me like I was a monster and mom's parents looked so happy, and for once, so did my sisters. I bowed to the crowd of people, then to my parents as I said "My true wish is to go to a public school." My parents said, "Your wish is my command." After I heard this, I couldn't help but feel this is the best birthday yet!

As I think back on the day Samatha told me she was having a baby, I think I don't need to mature as fast as her. I am who I want to be, and I learned on this very birthday to love myself for who I am.

### 13. Contaminating the Innocent



#### **My Hero**

By Genesis

It was my birthday. I was turning 10, so me and my mom went to the beach. Since I knew how to swim, my mom let me go further in the water. But the further I went, I started to see trash in the water, and then more trash.

I felt so bad for the people who would get the dirty water in the sea. So I swam to my mom and told her everything. At first she didn't believe me, but when I showed her, then she believed me.

And then she said, "Those people are going to get sick."

Then we went home.

When we got home, my mom went on the phone, but I didn't know who she was talking with. When she got off the phone, she said we were going somewhere. I didn't know where, but before we got there, we went to McDonald's because I was hungry. When we got to the place, my mom talked to someone, then we left.

The next day, my mom said, "Let's go to the beach."

When we got there, everything was clean, and she said that that was my surprise. I was so happy and that's why my mom will always be my hero.