

All the poetry and the essay on this page are from a collaboration between Street Roots and the Native American Youth and Family Center. The work here is from the students of Gabrielle Buvinger-Wild's Language Arts class, part of NAYA's Early College Academy.

Sorry I Missed Out

By Luz Barron

Dear Lucita,

I'm sorry I wasn't there for you,
on those cold and lonely nights,
when you cried yourself to sleep,
wondering where Daddy went.

I'm sorry I wasn't there for you,
when you were in danger,
and you didn't know what decision to take,
I should have been there to protect you from your mistakes.

I'm sorry I wasn't there for you,
when you were confused,
because I wasn't there to tell you,
what's right from wrong.

I'm sorry I wasn't there,
to see your beautiful smile when you were happy,
or wipe the tears off your chubby cheeks when you were sad.

I'm sorry for leaving
my two beautiful little girls
for a woman.

I should of put you and Nancy,
before anything else in the world.
You two are my most prized possessions.
It would break my heart,
if anything happened to my little girls.

But I am so sorry I wasn't able
to see my little princess
grow up into a
beautiful young lady.

Baby girl I'm sorry I wasn't there to say
I love you.

Sabes que te quiero con todo mi Corazon mija.

Love,
Daddy

Distress

By Lanie Grimm

You think you're a man because you place your hands upon a woman?
Does it make you sleep better at night?
Black and purple eye I still won't cry,
make me or break me
since you're such a tough guy.
You say you'll hit me so stick to your word,
be like Nike and just do it.
Just do it.
But I can't promise you one day I wont loose it. I'm a Goddess,
a Warrior,
and a Solider until death.
I stand by your side defending your incompetence. You're a sad pathetic person
Regardless of that, I love you
because you're my man.
Slammed on the floor CRACK breaking some bones. He screams, wallow
in your sorrows.
Think about what you have done.
A woman's heart is an ocean full of secrets,
she mourns after every hit,
praying and praying you will just quit.
You laugh about it, drink a beer,
and watch TV in the room like you never did it.
When does this stop?
Do I have to fight back?
This is the story of MY sick romance.

My Forgiveness

By Nancy

I'm sorry for all those unanswered questions.
I'm sorry for all those sleepless nights.
More than anything, I'm sorry for myself.

This isn't about you.
No, its about me.
I just wanna apologize to myself.
My grip was too strong, I held on for too long.
I damaged me more than anything.
I was slowly fading away.

Your forgiveness would ease the pain.
People always say you have to forgive yourself
in order to move on.

It's like my feet are running,
but my mind and soul are stuck in the past.
Not knowing how to fix this situation,
I'm afraid I'll be stuck there forever.

This might seem selfish,
but it's a place to start.

Not knowing how or when
this will end is an unsolved mystery.
I know once this is all over I'll have peace of mind.

I forgive myself.

I forgive myself,
for all those nights I cried.
I forgive myself,
because I know there are brighter days.

I forgive myself,
I put you through a lot,
and yet I manage to make it through another day.

Brown Pride

By Ana Flores

The colors,
people criticize.
My color is brown,
I am
Brown pride.
I am sad
More than I am
Happy.
I am gone,
Yet not reborn
In this world of mine.
From drugs too gangs,
Being disappeared,
Between
Homies and family from
Losing respect
To committing crimes
Gaining respect
Getting labeled
To prove and receive respect.
If one day I shall vanish
Away while my soul
is being carried
Far, far away,
I am
Brown pride.

To help save the Earth

BY ZACHERY CLOSE

Factories are killing our land. When our land dies what will we do? Will we have any meat, fruit, and vegetables to eat? We will all starve to death when our land dies. How long is it until we all die? Will the companies and factories stop when they cover the world with polluted air, or will they keep going?

Will they stop some day soon?

The factories and big companies make useless things: new cars, big flat screen plasma televisions, video games, game systems, motorcycles, and big boats. You don't need any of those. You can ride horses and ride canoes like my native ancestors. You can make up games instead of playing video games. You don't need fictional fake lives to watch. You have your friends, family, and you own life. Yes, life would be harder without these things, but it will be even harder when the factories destroy the earth.

I grew up hunting, fishing, and gardening. I had fun doing all of these things, but they will get taken away.

I admit I was scared when I went hunting for the first time. I only killed one animal with a gun. I killed a deer in Alaska on a big island called Prince Of Whales. I felt sad for killing that deer, but I gave most of the meat to my relatives and the skin to my cousin who took me out hunting.

In Alaska, I started fishing when I was about 8 years old. Fishing is what I do now in life. My first fish was a rock cod. When I caught it I let that fish back into the sea. I didn't want to take a life off this earth like I did with a deer.

Fishing is very important to me because my ancestors did it and I want to keep the traditional ways going. I would love for the young ones to fish traditionally and learn how

to use whale blubber to get medicine.

When the factories pollute the ocean and lakes there will be no plankton. No plankton means whales won't get food — and then no more whales. No more whales mean no medicine for my people. When we don't get medicine, we know the government won't help us because it's too money hungry.

So then my people will die.

In Washington on the Yakama reservation, the waste from factories and companies polluted the lakes and rivers. The white people blame the natives for the fish disappearing. The white people don't know that they are the reason why all the fish are disappearing. In the past 50 years, about 43,000 fish lost their instincts from company waste. Now the fish spawn in different areas and are missing from the Yakama River.

I was only 6 years old when I first went gardening with my grandma, and I grew to love it. The very first plant I planted grew until it died. It was a red rose. I was so happy when the red rose grew, and sad when it died.

Stop polluting and dumping waste in rivers and lakes. Stop killing the earth. Everyone needs to stop being selfish and think about the animals and the future. I don't care if it's making life much easier. Life is supposed to be a challenge. I know that life was much harder about a hundred of years ago for the Native Americans, but not for the white people. It was harder for the Native Americans because the Native Americans did hunting, fishing, and gardening; the same stuff I love doing. It isn't easy. It's more of a challenge but it's how my ancestors lived and that's how I want to live.

Do you want to save the Earth and have all this? If you don't want a beautiful land, meat, and fish, then continue doing what your doing. As for me, I want to help save the Earth.