Stories of Transformation are poems and writings to create a future where everyone is valued, where everyone is safe, and where everyone can thrive.

Idaho middle school and junior high school students were invited to write on one of five themes – We Choose All of Us, Belonging to Beloved Community, Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit, and Our Humanity, Together We are Stronger, and Earth is Sacred, Water is Life.

At the heart of these writings, we seek to end our culture of domination, extraction, and violence, and create a world with social equity and collective liberation for all human beings – a world rooted in interdependence, resilience, and regeneration.

The 10th Stories of Transformation publication was compiled from over 1,000 student submissions. Congratulations to Idaho’s middle school and junior high school student authors whose selections are published as well as the Stories of Transformation Award recipients who displayed critical thinking and excellence.

A special thank you to Idaho’s teachers who encouraged their students to discover new insights through writing and to the judges who read the amazing submissions by thousands of young people.

— Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence
We Choose All of Us
We are a people who choose
A world where everyone is valued, where everyone is safe, where everyone can thrive.
A world where love is love and kindness is everything.
Nothing less than this.
Every day we choose love and in this love everyone belongs to beloved community.
Everyone.

We are whole human beings. We believe in our collective humanity and our deep connection to all living things. We will create the world we want to see and move forward with courageous love and mutual responsibility.

We are all part of this story. When believe when we imagine together, we can achieve the unimaginable.

We commit to bringing forth a world rooted in interdependence, resilience, and regeneration.

We will live into this new story of Idaho with sacred responsibility, in silence, We look to the stars for lessons of interconnection, And abiding spirit.
We believe in the wonder of what wholeness can look like; the small glimmers of this place, first; and then the soft voice, growing stronger and clearer, until this world is fully realized.

Our choices have power.
We will be bold.
We invite you in.
We choose all of us.

Join us at www.WeChooseAllofUs.org

Gender and Violence
Gender is one of the core ways we learn to identify and expresses ourselves. Gender is socially and culturally constructed — it’s something we learn — not just something we inherit through our biology.

We learn and create our gender through our relationship to ourselves and our interactions with the people around us. And, even though much of gender is socialized, it is still very real; it shapes each of our experiences in profound and different ways.

Unfair treatment, harassment, or discrimination based on gender or gender expression is wrong and creates the conditions for gender violence – abuse and sexual assault – to occur.

We do not live single issue lives: we see the limitations of single identities of gender, sexual orientation, race, ability, class, religion, immigration and refugee status.

When identities like gender, race, religion, and many others are linked to power, control and domination, many people are devalued just for being who they are. When people are devalued it creates harm, including hurtful words, discrimination, and eventually physical violence.

We can change this by redefining what gender means to us and valuing everyone in our diverse communities.

We can interrupt and end all forms of hate, oppression, and violence and create a world where everyone is safe, everyone is valued, and everyone can thrive.
Shattered but Whole

I once could say with certainty that I was straight
But now I am unsure
I once had the courage to embrace change
But now, it’s harder than it once was
So many things have changed
Like rocks smashing glass,
It has shattered my identity
Yet I am whole,
My friends, my family,
My community helps me see,
From every point of view,
So that I can pick up the pieces
And form something new.

William Alvarado
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
she is art

it was the intentions of Mother Nature
creating something so beautiful
grounding her feet on the earth like roots
the sun shines on her face
her arms out
she's soaking up the warmth
she takes as much space as she needs
she is not ashamed
she thrives
her spirit could crush mountains yet it is so pure
she is resilient
she has fire in her belly
light you shouldn't dare put out
she is art

Lucy Brown
South Junior High School
Teacher: Christine Drick

Growth

Trickling drops were once a river;
the tallest sunflower, just a seed.
A small, laughing baby will be such a great man,
as rocks turn to pebbles that you toss in the sea.
Healing isn't easy,
it won't happen overnight.
Plant the idea in your head, though,
give it love and sunlight.
Feed it lots of water,
give it patience and care.
Maybe soon you will find that
a scab will be there.

Dylann Davis
South Junior High School
Teacher: Tyler Bevis
The Together Reeds

Alone, the reed sways and breaks in the wind. It falls and dies because it thought it could get through the storm alone. But together, the reeds sway and bend, dividing and cutting the work and wind, we can take anything.

Demetrius Frye
Orofino Junior Senior High school
Teacher: Michelle George

Formula For the Future

Math class isn't the only place with problems
Math class isn't the only place with division
Look at America
We have positive variables here but they're being canceled out by the negatives
It’s not that hard to balance the equation
We simply find common denominators
Substitute knowledge for ignorance
Love for hate
And hope the idea multiplies

Brooklyn Hallett
South Junior High School
Teacher: Tyler Bevis
My Self
My root is in Myanmar
But I went to Malaysia to get through USA
I speak Malay when I get to Malaysia but I move to USA
I speak Rohingya when I get to USA
I need to speak Rohingya when I get home
door
But when I get to school’s door
Start English
Like going back and forth
Every single day
Every week
Every month
Or every year

My Self
Akar saya di Myanmar
Tetapi saya pergi ke Malaysia untuk melalui Amerika Syarikat
Aaya bercakap Bahasa Melayu
Apabila saya sampai ke Malaysia Tetapi saya berpindah ke Amerika Syarikat
Saya bercakap Rohinyat
Apabila saya mendapat Amerika Syarikat saya perlu bercakap Rohingya Apabila saya pulang ke rumah
Tetapi apabila saya sampai ke pintu sekolah
Mulakan Bahasa Inggeris
Seperti pergi ke belakang dan sebagainya
Setiap hari
Setiap minggu
Setiap bulan
Atau setiap tahun

liquid hug
a calm breeze, greeting me from afar,
standing in the green whole grass,
the transparent water, letting me in,
forgiving me of all,
ignoring my past, present, future,
letting me as a whole in,
the cold sensation hugging me like a mother to her newborn child,
Sinking into it, like candle wax melting from the heat,
gone,
accepted.

Isabella Smith
South Junior High School

Nurjannaj Mohammadali
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
**Iuvenis (Young)**

They try to silence us
Telling us we are
Too young
To know anything
Too young
To speak out
Well I say I’m
Too young
To have friends
Who are scared to
To go school
Too young

To hear my friends
Yelled at in the streets
Too young
To hear that
Kids like me die every
day
We must do something
So let us rise up
Together
Because they will hear us
Together

**Avery Sterling**

*Fairmont Junior High School*
*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

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**Fences**

As our fences have grown taller,
we lost the connection that made our neighbors neighborly.
Although we deny it,
we are unwilling to deconstruct our fences in order to view each
other unbiasedly.
It was a rewarding time when we could count on our community
to help us when we needed it,
and to listen because we need it.
Fences,
sometimes we are all ignorant of the other side.

**Sophia Willmorth**

*South Junior High School*
*Teacher: Amber Strickler*
Classifications

She was a citizen of the world.
He was a citizen of nowhere.

We are grandmothers’ names that keep changing.

We are tongue tied on dry land still drowning in lost words.
We stumble and fall through conversations.

One word remains – “immigrant.”

On the tips of united, untied tongues it becomes a prison.

We arrive with nothing, they still manage to strip us of ourselves.

We clutch to asylum but they stand on our fingers.

Katrina Wright
North Junior High School
Teacher: Sarah Veigal

Earth’s land

The ground
The soil
The water
The waves
The plains
The grass
The mountain
The ridges
Earth is a story
Ready to explore
Across the ocean
Across the sea
Across the world
Across the moon
Around the sun
Back to Earth
On solid ground
Stepping forward
Into the unknown
World

Juniper Ammirati
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Acceptance

Is what we all want,
What we all deserve,
And what we all need.

People have been greedy
And only given it to the ones who
Look like them,
Act like them,
And think like them.

People are judged for differences
Which make them special
And who they are.
People are pushed into stereotypes
Which make them feel like outcasts.

But everyone needs
To be loved,
Helped,
And accepted.

Nate Arnold
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

The Water in Me

Sea air
Its salt stinging
Endless water
A mysterious expanse
Just beyond reach
The taste of salt
The beach shifting
before pounding waves
A caress of icy droplets
Merge before me
And I realize
With the infinite blue beyond
Just how small I am
And my heart swells
Hoping you’ll stay forever
Because you make me whole

Taelyn Joaquin Baiza
Treasure Valley Math and Science Center and North Junior High
Teacher: Timothy Rowe
Water is 60% of me
Ripples in a pond,
Waves in the sea,
Water is a big part of me,
Without the Earth,
It wouldn’t be,
On this Earth,
As we live free,
Greater features are
Beyond the sea,
The view of Earth
Is what I call "my natural health"
Mountains, valleys,
Birds, trees,
This is a stress relief,
Closing my eyes,
Feeling the breeze,
Smelling fresh air,
Earth and its features
Are beyond compare.

Dallin Banister
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Halls
Boy
long hair, doesn’t
know who he is
and his jokes are the best;
no one hates him.
Girl
scarf over her head
skin the darkest brown
and the kindest heart;
no one hates her.
Hallway
faces of all colors
clothing of all cultures
people of all histories and
more than just that:
a person, not just a face;
no one hates anyone for
just being themselves.

Charley Beebe
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Her

Voice
dismissed by
the ones saying
they’re better
they’re stronger
than Her.

Mind
says never give up
never step down
when they
ignore Her.

If they’re
too arrogant to listen
to Her
then who will know
when the sky
is falling
and the only
one who realizes
is Her?

Charley Beebe
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

Symphonies

In a world
Where we grow
Only as short as the ones before us
seeing
Only the darkness of our past
singing the same song
That was heard years ago
A symphony
The harsh pound of racism
strings of homophobia
With notes of sexism
Still we sing
sing without voices
sing without choices
As the conductor stands
So does she
challenging
Without a voice
But her actions were powerful enough
To bring melodies of imperfection

Kate Beswick-Seidl
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
A Tasteless Absence

Mother Earth providing the ripple in our puddle, to let our river flow, to take us where we were once before.
Springtime showers pitter patter our soil and soul, of what remains.
Our ground will expel beauty, and you will smell of that too.
Oh soon, she will provide a glass to soothe my throat, releasing the will of my mind.
Then I may speak that, discouraging none.
Myself as a whole.
A Tasteless Absence.

Where Is Here

Check on our own, the ones left behind and ahead.
Where their blood may stream and turn purple when soaked.
Where a strand of hair shows the encountered, ignoring no introductions, only explanations.
As seen in a small town film, where the main character disobeys.
Where it all melts away.

Shavonne Bostaph
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Julie Davis
CLARITY

Looking down
Over a hill, into a valley
Glowing
Yellow lights, like fire
Everywhere
Illuminating their paths
Falling down into the swarm of lights
Dancing magical lights above
A galaxy
Grass between fingers
Looking up at beauty
A serene feeling
Clarity.

Danielle Brewer
South Junior High School
Teacher: Tyler Bevis

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

Although we think of things separately because they have different properties:
happiness and sadness
hope and despair
joy and misery,
one cannot understand good feelings without the bad. In fact, there is not one without the other; they are all part of one glorious plan. One can only recognize the sweetness because they have tasted the bitterness. If we put our differences aside and try to help one another, we will experience this wonderful life.

Lindsey Brown
Tigert Middle School
Teacher: Lorrie'L Jensen
TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

To play the piano you need all the notes. The different pitches make harmonies and melodies. Even though the harmony does not sound very good alone, it makes the melody sound better. Together, they make music and then more people or instruments can be added, thus creating duets, symphonies, and more sophisticated sounds. Humans can make each other better. They can make new tunes, styles, and songs, but one person cannot do that alone.

Lindsey Brown
Tigert Middle School
Teacher: Lorrie'L. Jensen

Catching Water

As a baby, I tried to catch it. The water flowed through my grasping hands; I tried to understand it. I never did.
Now, on the trails, I’m drawn to the sound of running water, Flowing over rocks, In raging currents. It’s dangerous, Moving with unrelenting force. I know I cannot catch it. But I still feel its cool touch sliding over my fingers. The same water which slipped through a child’s hands. My hands.

Allie Bruce
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Neutrons

There is no such thing as a good person
Or a bad person, it just depends on perspective.
We are all just individuals who share the same planet
And deep down no one is “good” or “bad”
We are the neutrons of our atom of life,
We have no positive or negative charge such as the protons
and electrons.
But the neutrons that holds together the nucleus of life
Charge-less, but the most important part

Owen Carswell
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

Displacement

Do we belong anywhere?
Wherever you go on this planet
There will be one more place you haven’t been
Because our world is always changing, by man, by nature.
Buildings are being demolished,
War is being fought.
People are always changing too,
Nothing ever stays the same,
So you can never really be lost,
At the end of the day, our displacement is zero
Because there was never X1 in the first place

Owen Carswell
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
The Sculptor
She sits and watches
By her pottery wheel,
As the past sculpts the future.
She is scared that she will be controlled
That she will be delicate and weak
Like a flower
Being blown around
Lifelessly in the wind.
But she knows she is strong,
Like a river,
Can shape canyons and ravines
The future.

Olivia Case
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

A Lonely Bench
Every day he waited
No one noticed him.
He was always alone.
Everyday at school,
Every day at home.
He had no one.
His heart was empty.
His soul was broken.
He always waited alone
On the little bench
But one day
The other came along.
That one day when
Someone finally noticed him
Someone finally talked to him,
Someone showed him compassion.
His heart became whole.
His soul was fixed
He wasn't alone.

James Cirelli
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
A New Reality

I look down in the blue puddle
I don’t simply see a little puddle.
What I see is a light and hope.
I see a world away from reality
I see no darkness in our eyes
Only light awakens from within our souls
Our world is bright, colorful and welcoming.
We are all together, as one society
I look up, I only find darkness
We must bring light to Earth
Only then is there happiness.

James Cirelli
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Identities

We’ve made harm, darkness, sadness, depression,
From all of this we’ve dehumanized our communities
Our identities
Hidden what’s left
We certainly can’t change what we’ve done
But we can improve, shape it
Us as one whole community can make us who we are
What we wanna be
In the dark we’ll see light
In no success there’s another chance
If the odds just don’t seem right
Together we are stronger
And that’s alright

Linda Lee Craig-Slovak
Orofino Junior Senior High school
Teacher: Michelle George
Reclamation

hearts broken over and over again,
sweet memories of childhood
lost to others inability to accept anyone
that doesn’t follow society’s rules.
our names turned into slurs,
shouted across the hallway in an attempt to diminish our self worth.
and yet,
when the cruel words of those who cut us
cut deep enough,
we bleed not blood,
but every color of the rainbow.

Lindsey Crandall
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Nicole Jones

on conforming

our society raised us to believe what we felt was so wrong
told over and over again
to confine to the rules that we as humans
have clung to for far too long
so we challenge the binary
and step out of the norm
proving to the world that we are
not willing to conform

Lindsey Crandall
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Nicole Jones
Truly Sacred

Sacred
highly-valued and important
is the definition by book,
but if it means valued then
why aren’t we treating our world as sacred?
If it is our duty to take care of this world
the one right now,
then why are we killing it?
You can value it deeply,
but you’re not doing anything about it?
Why are we tearing each other down
when we should be working together
to save what is truly sacred.

Sydney Crandall
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Why Does it Stay as a Hope?

To have
Love and Kindness
is defined as being accepting and kind
to others
ALL of others
regardless of their
race, gender, sexuality, religion
or their deepest values
so when we want to hope
for “radical empathy”
and a loving kind world,
Why does it stay as a hope?
How deep that actually goes is your choice.
It’s simple,
and yet why can’t we change?

Sydney Crandall
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
The Greatest Utopia

Love is a powerful thing
to accept someone
for being themselves
makes them feel love
and that’s the best feeling.
If the world was magic,
with no stereotype
or bias,
the world would be a beautiful place.
Our values, the deepest values,
if they were accepted
I think that would be
The Greatest Utopia.

Sydney Crandall
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

We Choose All of Us

It means to me that you can’t just pick my friend
you have to pick me too.

Capone Crumb
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
Grandma

Sweet smells of the kitchen
Warm fire of the living room
Safe feeling all around
The Warm hugs she gives
The Great example she sets
Feeling of belonging
A place of gathering
And good times
The place everyone loves
Grandma’s house.

Chloe Davis
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Jungle

Special
Hunt for food
Hunt birds to eat with family
I go with the men
Rain, Drip, wet
Big green trees with vines
Little dark and noisy
Creatures and birds
Homemade slingshot
Marble, rock or dirt
Made hard by fire

Kato Dieu
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
We Have Purpose

Our spirit is like a flower pot it's fragile but firm we get chipped and feel like life is not worth it any more but we still have a purpose in life we can be fixed again but only if we're willing to do so if you don't we crumble beyond repair we can still live life to the fullest we can hold something beautiful we are a garden of hope.

Robert Dirimo Dransfield
Crossroads Alternative School
Teacher: Robert Zumbrun

water is life earth is sacred

I walk as my eyes are closed.
But I can see everything around me.
As I walk, I hear the water running.
The grass waving in the wind.
I stop out of thirst.
I see a pond and lean over for a drink.
The refreshing taste gives me strength, it keeps me moving.
There is nothing better, than the taste of fresh water and the smell of the earth.

Destiny Dursteler
Tigert Middle School
Teacher: Lorrie'L. Jensen
Paddle
Swiping each ripple,
paddle board beneath my
feet.
Depths overwhelm me.
Beauty.
Obscure, unknown,
cloudy.
Life and water.
Never knowing what’s below.
Water is future,
open to change.

Clear, misty.
We rely on water
to keep us afloat or
to have us sink.
Water is
uncontrollable.
Freedom.
Water is a part of each life.
Connecting.
All.
Together.

Violet Feigenbutz
Moscow Middle School
Teacher: Tiffany Scripter

Little Things
The little things
I’m grateful for
The blue sparkling water that quenches my thirst
As it goes down my throat
The food I eat which sustains me
The water, the sun, the soil that nourish me
These are the little things
The roof over my head
The family that I have
The family that won’t leave me
The family that supports me
These are the little things that I can’t live without

Yahdira Fernandez
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
My People
My people
the ones who are with me
the ones who aren't with me
My people
the ones who love me for me
the ones who accept all my faults
My people
the ones who know who I am
the ones that I can count on
My people

Callia Findley
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Why do we make boundaries
Why do we make borders
When they hold us back
Why do we say the sky's the limit
When we've been to the moon
Why can't we work together
So nothing can hold us back
So why should we
Set the limit at the sky
But why not have no limit
We all are equal
So why don't we
Act like it's true
After all we are stronger together

Kelson Fisse
South Junior High School
Teacher: Tyler Bevis
My world
I live in a world
where I fear for my life
ever time the intercom sparks to life,
where I talk about
guns
more than classwork.
With stereotypes I’ll never exceed,
and hatred.
But I live in a world
where I can make a difference,
I can stand up for what I believe in,
where everyone is beautiful.
We continue to break society’s stereotypes,
and negative mindsets.
Together, we make this world.

Shelby Hale
South Junior High School

Step Outside We Choose All Of Us
Our one connection to the world
and to each other
is through valuing each other’s whole selves
Everyone can be accepted for who they are
instead of who other people assume they are
We can live in a place where no one is afraid to step outside
because they fear being judged
A place where wholeness is valued
and we hope for the success of one another
and not failure

Razmira Hamidovic
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
A United Force

We stand together, strong.
Fighting for rights.
Fighting against hate people face.
Standing for dreams trampled,
Courage a heading force,
Whole hearts beating louder,
Stronger we stand,
Against hatred and injustice.
Fighting against fascist ideas TRYING to pull us apart,
Those ideas failing.
Emotional victories
Still, fighting
Days, months, years.
Growing stronger
Passion growing as fast as fear,
Together.
A united force,
With only scratch.
Stronger than most,
A community fighting for a better existence.

Emma Hird
Anser Charter School
Teacher: Julie Bu

I Hope

I hope by the time I’m gone, things are different.
I hope people change.
I hope life is loved not just lived.
I hope people see beauty before flaws.
I hope fighting stops, and peace dominates.
I hope people learn more than what’s on the paper.
I hope every person on this earth knows they are worth something.
I hope that before my life is over I will no longer have to hope.

Bentleigh Jones
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Regrowth

you are a tree
growing, changing, and
with a core of iron
when they hack at your trunk
and rip off your leaves
you survive.
the stump of a severed branch
is where the children swing
and play, dreaming of a pirate ship
or thick jungle
or enemy invasion.
the cuts on your trunk
are where caterpillars hide
and birds nest in your thick, strong branches
and you survive.
no, you thrive.

Grace Kadre
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Water?

Falling, falling down
Ever hoping to reach
The end.
Only to
Find that
It keeps moving
Down and down.
As the water journeys,
Down and down
Waiting and working for
That state of rest.
Ever working, churning, working through
The harsh rapids of cold, icy stings
Always looking to the end, for rest
For peace
The beauty of nature, embracing the lake of which the water is
And holding it for fear of disturbance.

Owen Kepple
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Trees, chained to the ground by their roots, reaching up to the sky to feel the sunlight on their ever-growing limbs.
A cold stream, constantly flowing through the seasons, regardless of the weather.
My tent, resting in the grove, birds darting back and forth, chirping all the while.
It’s calming.
No responsibilities, No needs, Just nature.
It’s quiet.
No cars, Or trains, Just the trickle Of a waterfall.
It’s refreshing.
It’s hopeful.
It’s our planet.

Restoring wholeness, our spirit and humanity
I felt sacred when I was on the phone with my dad. Every once in while, he would call me because he was in prison, but at the end of each phone call we would pray before we hung up and that made me feel sacred.

Tashia Lackaff
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Alex Kitsinger
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
A Better Place

Imagine a peaceful world,
with no more war,
with equality,
and freedom.
We always talk about making the world better place,
But we really do nothing about it.
Do your part.
We are blessed with so many things
That are given to us to help others,
But we are all selfish to not help or give.
We get so many opportunities and chances to help others,
But we do nothing.
Let’s change that.

Brisa Leon
William Thomas Middle School
Teacher: Ashley Matthews

Love Yourself

Boys and girls have many things in common:
We all think we have to be someone else in order to have friends.
You’re wrong.
Don’t be someone else to be loved.
Get to know yourself before you make a change.
Your personality, your talents, your emotions.
Don’t hold any of that back.
Because if you change, you will lose who you really are.
And then no one will know who you are.
Not even yourself.

Brisa Leon
William Thomas Middle School
Teacher: Ashley Matthews
Malaysia

There was a lot of rainforests
frogs making noises
lots or water dripping
streams
there was never forest fires.
The elephants came as a group
And stepped on the villages
Sometimes they can kill people
Sometimes you can hear the footsteps
Sometimes you can hear the noise
It was really hot
People used umbrella
For shade
This is my home

Htai Lin
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Water

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore
While I stand on the road way, or on the pavement’s gray surface,
I hear it in the deep heart’s core.

Stormy Locke
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
It’s Ok

Not everyone can see
You are an introvert
Like me;
Eating alone and roaming free,
Fighting away insecurity
By wandering and independently
It’s ok

We’re not all meant to be
vibrant personalities
Exuding extrovert qualities
But we’ve built this world
Around that belief
Isn’t it a relief
Now we can stop trying to be
Characteristically
Someone we’re not

Stormy Locke
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Changes

Depression
Loneliness
Crying
Left out
Bullying
Abuse
There’s one common thing about these
Us.
We’re the reason why others are hurt.
We are who cause the hurt
If we were just kind to each other it would change
One change can help others
If we could only make those changes.

Claudia Luna
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
Live to Love

Choose to love
Love all of yourself
Love all of someone else
All or nothing
There’s no maybe or I will try in love
From the roots of our hair
To the bottom of our feet
Self love is a feeling you get
When you decide to ignore the world
Not the kind and beloved
But the negative and harmful
Live to live
And love to love
Because love is love

How many plastic islands?
How many forests need to be chopped down?
How many oil spills?
How many ducks trapped in plastic soda rings?
How many beaches closed from illegal dumping?
How many chemicals released?
How many more people taking clean air for granted?
How much more has to happen?
How long until we make a difference.

Megan Marty
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

Maddie Mann
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
How many plastic islands?
How many forests need to be chopped down?
How many oil spills?
How many ducks trapped in plastic soda rings?
How many beaches closed from illegal dumping?
How many chemicals released?
How many more people taking clean air for granted?
How much more has to happen?
How long until we make a difference.

**Megan Marty**  
*South Junior High School*  
*Teacher: Amber Strickler*

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I’m not afraid  
Not afraid to stand up for what I believe in.  
I’m not afraid to swing up onto the back of a horse  
To capture frogs and bugs in a bucket  
To chase the boys too scared to hold the water snake  
I spent so long trying to catch  
Just because I am female.  
I guess you could call me,  
A boy-ish kind of girl

**Lauryn Mayne**  
*South Junior High School*  
*Teacher: Amber Strickler*
“Equality is a requirement but diversity is a choice”

I choose all of us.
It’s been a hot minute since we all fit in.
People treat each other like we belong in a waste bin.
When someone accepts you for who you are there’s a special bond.
That special bond isn’t supposed to be so special.
It’s a bond meant for everyone and everything.
“Equality is a requirement but diversity is a choice,” Hazija Mberwa once said.
We choose all of us.

Hazija Mberwa
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Look into the eyes of love.

People say love is complicated,
is it really though?
To me love is so simple a toddler understands it.
Love doesn’t have to be explained all you have to do is feel.
Once you really feel the feeling of love you have looked into its eyes
and that’s just the beginning.
Love can be experienced singular or plural.
Look into the eyes of love then come tell me it’s complicated, it’s not ...
trust me.

Hazija Mberwa
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
Restoring Our Humanity

We can live
Without living.

We move,
We eat,
We sleep,

But we don’t really live,
We’re not really awake.

We need to awaken.
To really, truly, actually live
We can achieve great things in life.

So how do we live?
We just have to
Awaken

We just have to
Discover the
Physical
Emotional
And
Spiritual
world around us.

Water is Alive

“The water is alive. Once you dive it will immediately bear its fangs and attack. But don’t be afraid, don’t resist the water.” Water, it lets me into a place where I can be me. Like a flood gate letting everything gently through the smallest rift of your emotions and brain calming everything in your body. Water is a sacred thing. It’s how we live. Water is a calming piece of the world.

Brinkley Miller
Eagle Rock Junior High
Teacher: Carrie Garner

Quote by Haruka Nanase, fictional character in the anime series Free!
Water and forest

water
sound can say a million words
if you just took the time to listen
feel of the ice cold water hitting your hand
as you slowly put your hand under the water.
forest is beautiful in my eyes it is an art
breeze rushing through tops of the trees.
roughness when you put your hand on the tree bark as
you run you hand down the tree the bark crumbles.

Jaelyn Miller
Orofino Junior Senior High school
Teacher: Michelle George

Artistic Nightmare

In choir class, we are a family.
In theatre class, we are strangers.
We sing together.
We act in our cliques.
All semester.
All semester.
We are a family.
We are strangers.
How do you do it?
We reach out.

Charlotte Mitchell
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
Water is Life
What falls from the sky?
What keeps flowers from getting dry?
Water does amazing things,
It helps flowers grow in spring.
Water is to hydrate,
It keeps life healthy and great.
Trees grow with help of water,
That way, we get photosynthesis,
From the rivers to the lakes,
Water is life it’s not fake.
Water is a way of life,
Stare into a pool reflection and remember,
Water gave us this.

Earth is Sacred
As the nature-filled days pass,
Rain starts to fall from the sky.
Trees are taller, rivers longer.
This universe created beautiful things,
All the way from winter to spring.
Thanks, Earth for the valleys,
For the dew on mountain tops,
For all the wonders that make me stop.
Take a moment. Thank Earth.
Close your eyes and imagine treasures,
Smell the flowers,
Earth made this possible.
Earth is Sacred.
We Choose All of Us

Treat others how you want to be treated
Be kind and stop putting others down
Get self esteem, confidence by bringing others up
Feel good about yourself
Love others
Help others
Connect with others
Connect with yourself and
Value yourself.

Suzette Guerrero Ocampo
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

We Choose All of Us

To choose all of us
Is to accept and look into our full humanity
Disregarding our gender,
Our sexuality, our beliefs.
Because we all shouldn't just judge by looks
It’s better to get to know them,
And understand them,
Because choosing and understanding
Can make us all feel much better about ourselves.

Mauricio Ortega
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
Pride

together we stand
broken and bent
holding hands for the world,
against it. We guard those
who are not yet born.
Each one of us is
strong. Forged from our own fires of
determination. Fueled by the words
that pierce our skin. True beauty
is stronger than hate. True love
is stronger than protests.
they jeer and mock us, but we stand.
we stand for ourselves, and we glow
with the colors of the rainbow.

Addison Peterson
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

We choose us.

We choose us.
We choose to stand up,
to defend. We are all chosen."Some don’t know that yet.
"You can’t do it," they jeer at us,
thinking they are unpicked.
Unwatched.
But we are all together,
we choose all of us.
For every person who has given in,
there are hundreds who begin to fight.
Leaving behind their mark,
big or small, our world begins to change.
And through that change,
comes you.

Addison Peterson
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
Community
My people are from a small country and a war-scared landscape. My grandparents, uncles/aunts, and parents have all been dehumanized before. During the war anyone who wasn't Serbian was treated as dirt. They executed people for even the smallest discretion. Some of my family’s close friends were those people. I don’t hate Serbians or Bosnians and most people don’t now. We’ve learned that sticking together and being kind were better than revenge and violence.

Dion Ramadani
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

Artificial is Ugly, Identity is Beautiful
Being yourself is hard to be,
Never knowing what people are thinking about you
Worse, always knowing.
Why be you,
When you’re successful as someone else.
Because that person will only get you so far.
Your identity won’t leave you,
It may be the worst thing that you own.
You can’t find similarities,
If yours are all fake.
Be true to yourself.
Or you won’t find your life,
You will be living in someone else’s.

Bella Rausch
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Restoring Wholeness, Our Spirit & Humanity

Sacred can only be described by internal peace. When you find peace inside yourself and can recognize that and nurture it, you and your activities become sacred. I think when you self-reflect and focus on making yourself better, sacredness is easier to attain. I think religion also helps many people understand the concept. Often life gets stressful and if you eliminate stress, peace and the feeling of being sacred can become a regular feeling.

Alex Romriell
*Fairmont Junior High School*
*Teacher: Adam Phillips*

Hard Times
Art.
That is what helps me through the hard times.
Friends.
To support me in my art.
Fans.
They give me inspiration.
Haters.
People who give me the hard times.
Also,
The ones who make my art possible.

Kaylee-Ann Sample
*South Junior High School*
*Teacher: Amber Strickler*
Our Voice

We stand up to the corrupt,
Crooked,
and unethical,
We stand as one.
Hand in hand,
Heart with heart.
Let our voices be heard,
And intentions undoubted
We will no longer be bystanders,
To the bigotry or hate.
We will create a true land of the free for all,
Black or white,
Man or woman,
Christian or Muslim,
Gay or straight,
We stand up to the rotten
Shady,
and unjust
We stand as one.

CJ See
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

I am a drop of water
a salty tear on a page
Even after I've dried
a crinkle of me is left on the paper
People are trying to erase me
and all the people like me
but we are not pencil scratched thoughts
and erasers can't impact an ocean

Jane Shoen
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
How Joy Feels

As the wind blows through the trees,
I walk on the path through the forest and start to notice things.
I see birds fluttering in the trees.
I hear mice skittering under bushes.
The trees look magical under the golden sunlight
as it pierces through the leaves and glows on the forest floor.
I start to walk home
thinking about how joy feels.

Finn Simon
Riverstone International School
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno

My True Identity

I walk through the halls of my school
People pass and stare at me like I’m not the same person I was yesterday
I’m still me
The only change is that everyone now knows my secret
I’m part of the LGBT community and I finally feel like I belong
No more secrets
No more lies about who I was hanging out with last night
This is me and I’m Bisexual

Megan Smith
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker
Mountains

Water is Life, Earth is Sacred
They rise above us
But they don’t ridicule
They let you take parts of them
But not too much
They stay still
As they move

Thatcher J. Smith
Tigert Middle School
Teacher: Lorrie'L. Jensen

We
Bear the weight of the world,
We’ve,
Walked through more fires than you know,
We’re
Holding up the sky, but nowhere near it,
We,
Support the bridge of peace,
Hands reach out,
We’re
No longer alone

Sada Soe
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
Lucky Charms

Stars
No star is the same
different pieces to a big puzzle
like the night sky.
Perfect just the way we are
all special in our own way.
A galaxy of different people from different places
making something great.
We have the Milky Way
We are the Lucky Charms.

Briley Standridge
Orofino Junior Senior High school
Teacher: Michelle George

Tiny Dancer

A leap and a bound
her feet touch the ground
like a top floating on water
she dances like it’s no bother
she is a ballerina, graceful and petite
she is a drop of water gentle and free
no one to please.

Briley Standridge
Orofino Junior Senior High school
Teacher: Michelle George
**Amare (Love)**

Imagine a day without hate
A day where everyone is free
Let me help you illustrate
This perfect day I see
Two boys walk down the street
Hand in hand, looking sweet
No one stares
On this perfect day without a care
A boy runs
His dress billowing in the breeze
With hair a shade
Of forest green
A beloved community
Will never hate
They stand in unity
To never discriminate

**Avery Sterling**
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips

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**Natus (Born)**

My heart is a flower
That blooms through the dirt
My words are the thorns
Adorning my stem
In my darkest hour
The water comes forth
Restoring my power
As I rise from the Earth
I take a look around
To truly see
All that has brought me here
And all I could eventually be
With the help of the water
And the grace of the Earth
I rise toward the sun

**Avery Sterling**
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
America

Living under all of this hypocrisy
It's hard to believe that we're a democracy
And honestly it doesn't feel as if
We're governed by the people
It seems as if we're governed by the Speaker
The House, The Senate
They seem to have much control
But reality is
Rather than being judged by what I wear
Rather than being judged by who I support
Rather than being judged by what I believe
Let's work together

Shaedon Stratton
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

Ephemeral

I look up,
down,
up.
Pause.
Eyes locking with the sky,
A staring contest.
The intimidating sky,
Color of crushed ice,
Doesn't look away.
Neither do I.
I stare, knowing, there is
nothing.
Unpause.

Sydney Summers
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Mike Baker

I look down,
Breaking the connection.
Dark pear green ground,
Stares back at me with disgust.
Screaming.
My thoughts get lost.
Plastic bag floats aimlessly,
Crinkling, shining.
Humanity could be better.
Look.
The beautiful earth is breaking,
Like a heart shattering.
Thinking About the Sounds That Nature Makes

I go outside to go for a walk across the Greenbelt for a bit. Thinking about the sounds that nature makes, I feel the wind hitting me. I start to focus on the sounds that don’t appear as loud as the others, which makes the louder sounds more quiet. I turn around as the sounds that are far away get louder. As I listen, I start to think about what makes me more aware.

Shoki Takagi
Riverstone International School
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno

By myself, I am weak,
But Together, We are strong.
By myself, I could move a rock,
But Together, We can move mountains.

Together, we can make a world,
Where there is no violence,
No discrimination.

By myself, I am weak.
But Together, we are mighty.
By myself, there is chaos,
But Together, serenity.

Peyton Sumner
Moscow Middle School
Teacher: Tiffany Scripter
A Strand of Thread

A single strand of thread alone, cannot save a life,
But a thousand can.
In a rope, there are many strands of thread,
The more strands tied together, the stronger it is.
The less strands on the rope there are,
The more easily it will snap in half.

Shaylee Taylor
Orofino Junior Senior High School
Teacher: Michelle George

whole, complete

inhale.
exhale.
whole, complete
i am here i was here i’ll be here.
whole.
complete.
here.
in God.
i am whole, complete
i am loved and can love.
whole.
complete.
i belong.
i am here
i can love
and be loved.
unconditionally!
whole, and complete.

Savina Tulilov
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
Quickly Forgive, But Never Forget

One girl sits on her porch, looking out to the stars, as she thinks about what she just read.

In her school, she is learning about the Holocaust, which she barely thought about before now.

She realizes that, as she touches the snow with her shivering, cold fingers, she can never change the past.

But, she can learn from it.

She can never repeat the mistakes of the past, and instead learn from her own.

Fiona Vant De Graff
Riverstone International School
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno

water; falls

water;
falls.
down cliffs in rivers underground.
from the clouds, nay, the skies, nay, the heavens!
water. it falls.
water is clean, clear and beautiful.
also dirty, dangerous, diseased.
like us.

water is sacred, perfect, pure.
water is gentle, water is free.
water can refresh and nourish.
water can torment, drown, destroy.
...
like us.
water fills the seas and carves the canyons
and we kill. destroy. torment.

and still.

water
falls

Savina Tulilov
Fairmont Junior High School
Teacher: Adam Phillips
**Second Chances**

No matter  
What we believe in  
What we hope for  
Who we love  
How we try  
Everyone  
In this world  
Deserves a second chance  
A life they can be happy with  
A place they can call home  
A person they can lean on  

And  
The sight of beauty  
Everyday  
Someone gets wronged  
Someone gets left behind  
Someone cries  
None can stop the natural  
But everyone can try  
To save, to help,  
And to be kind  

Fiona Van De Graff  
*Riverstone International School*  
Teacher: Elizabeth Bruno

**Your Song**

People always tell us we are all the same  
But truthfully, we are not  
Everyone is so different  
Spectacular, shockingly beautiful  

We aren’t the same  
So don’t let anyone tell you otherwise  
You are unique  
You are astonishing  
So just do you boo  
And keep on calling playing your song  
Called life  

Carly Veile  
*Tigert Middle School*  
Teacher: Lorrie’L Jensen
That’s When We All Win

Imagine for a day, the whole world could come together, what we would accomplish, might repair our Earth. Imagine for an hour, the whole world could make peace, we would brighten the future.

If we would realize what we are capable of together, maybe we could put our differences aside. Perhaps for a minute, we can come together. Alter the future, and make the whole world a better place. Afterall, that’s when we all win.

Conner Veltrus
Moscow Middle School
Teacher: Tiffany Scripter

My Special Place By: Van Vestal

Smell of damp earth and the old fallen leaves Sweet or bitter trees
So calming just wanna lay down and day dream, The noises of the birds surrounds me Fresh air and the morning dew,
Rivers pushing water Downstream effortlessly The force of the water is underestimated, The sun shining on my face Finally finding my place, The stars come out lighting up the sky Then the fireflies This is my special place

Van Vestal
Hillside Junior High School
Teacher: Micheal Baker
Too Young

You say I am too young
Too young to know my own sexuality
Too naive
Too sensitive
Too young to be depressed
Too young to be hurt
Too young
And you are right
I am too young
Too young for
HOMOPHOBIA
RACISM
SEXISM
SELF HARM
SUICIDE
To be normal to me
My generation has great knowledge
of the marvelous and unbearable of society today
WE WILL BE THE ONES TO DO GOOD WITH OUR KNOWLEDGE!

Kiyara Wear
Moscow Middle School
Teacher: Tiffany Scripter

We Need to Hear Them

We grew up in a world where people didn’t listen, so we raised our voices.
However, we shouldn’t have needed to shout to be heard.
Now, sometimes the air becomes so filled with deafening shouts and chants
of those who are trying to drive their point through, that we drown out the quietly proposed opinions.
When we choose all of us,
We choose to listen to everyone, weather they strive to be heard or not.

Sophia Willmorth
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler
The Country

Placid, serene, and tranquil
Not a single car whizzes by, polluting the silence, only the organic swish of the rippling grass to tenderly caress your ears.
There are no other humans to interrupt or talk over you, only the listening existence of the worn cattle and sheep, who welcome you into their domain.
There are no towering buildings to obstruct the night horizon, only the unique and genuine sunsets paint the dark sky every night.

Sophia Willmorth
South Junior High School
Teacher: Amber Strickler

* Stories of Transformation Award
  + More than one poem

Anser Charter School
Boise
Emma Hird

Crossroads Alternative School
Meridian
Robert Dirimo Dransfield

Eagle Rock Junior High
Idaho Falls
Brinkley Miller

Fairmont Junior High School
Boise
Lindsey Crandall+
Sydney Crandall+
Capone Crumb
Callia Findley
Razmira Hamidovic
Grace Kadre
Tasha Lackaff
Maddie Mann
Hazija Mberwa+
Suzette Guerrero Ocampo
Mauricio Ortega
Addison Peterson+
Dion Ramadani

Alex Romriell
Avery Sterling+*
Savina Tulilov+

Fremont Middle School
Melba
Grace Noe+

Hillside Junior High School
Boise
William Alvarado*
Juniper Ammirati
Nate Arnold
Charley Beebe+
Kate Beswick-Seidl
Allie Bruce
Owen Carswell+
Olivia Case
Yahdira Fernandez
Bentleigh Jones
Owen Kepple
Alex Kitsinger
Bella Rausch
Megan Smith
Shaedon Stratton
Sydney Summers
Van Vestal
North Junior High
Boise
Katrina Wright*

Moscow Middle School
Moscow
Violet Feigenbutz
Vigo Miller
Peyton Sumner
Conner Veltrus
Kiyara Wear

Orofino Junior Senior High School
Orofino
Demetrius Frye*
Linda Lee Craig-Slovak
Jaelyn Miller
Briley Standridge+
Shaylee Taylor

Riverstone International School
Boise
Finn Simon
Shoki Takagi
Fiona Van De Graff+

South Junior High School
Boise
Dallin Banister
Shavonne Bostaph+
Danielle Brewer
Lucy Brown*
James Cirelli+
Dylann Davis*
Chloe Davis
Kato Dieu
Kelson Fisse
Shelby Hale
Brooklyn Hallett*
Htai Lin
Stormy Locke+
Claudia Luna
Megan Marty
Lauryn Mayne
Charlotte Mitchell
Nurjannah Mohammadali*
Kaylee-Ann Sample
CJ See
Jane Shoem
Isabella Smith*
Saka Soe
Sophia Willmorth+*

Tigert Middle School
Soda Springs
Lindsey Brown+
Destiny Dursteler
Thatcher J Smith
Carly Veile

Treasure Valley Math and Science Center
Boise
Taelyn Joaquin Baiza

William Thomas Middle School
American Falls
Brisa Leon+
Support Friends Who Have Experienced Abusive Relationships or Sexual Assault

When someone is abused or sexually assaulted, they usually tell a friend first, if they tell anyone. Sometimes they don’t say anything, but you may notice something is wrong and be worried about them.

While it can be hard to know what to do, you have a lot of influence in encouraging your friend to get the help they need. Here are a few suggestions to help a friend:

**Start the Conversation** — Begin a conversation from a place of concern, avoid judgment or lecturing. Let your friend know what you’ve noticed and don’t be afraid to tell them you’re worried. Be sure your friend knows that no one deserves to be hurt and that you aren’t blaming them for anything.

**Listen and Be Supportive** — Ask them to share anything they feel comfortable sharing, then really listen. It’s not your job to gather all the facts, just to support and listen. Let your friend talk about the abuse or sexual assault in the way that they need to. Make them feel safe with you as the person they choose to talk to and give them time to share their experience. Know your friend may not recognize the abuse (which may happen through texts, on the phone, or online), might be afraid or embarrassed to talk about a sexual assault, or may be confused about what happened to them. Also understand that your friend may not realize that coerced sex (when someone manipulates, tricks, or guilts a person into sex) is sexual assault. If your friend didn’t want it to happen, then it shouldn’t have. If your friend was sexually assaulted, encourage them to seek immediate medical treatment.

**Things To Say** — Encourage your friend to get help from a trusted adult, and help them connect to the resources they need. Don’t judge your friend. Here’s examples of things to say:

“I’m here for you.”

“I’m sorry this happened to you. No one deserves to be hurt.”

“It’s not your fault.”

“I am worried about you.”

“How can I help?” or “What do you need?”

**Stay Connected** — Your friend needs you to listen and be supportive. Respond with understanding and empathy, not anger. Your friend may not want help from anyone. Understand what you see or hear may make you frustrated and upset. Don’t close the door of communication by threatening to do something they don’t want. Also, expect that your friend may share and then not say anything to you for several weeks or even months. Don’t pressure them to talk, just let them know you are available when they want to talk.

**Get Support** — Your friend may feel more comfortable talking about the situation with someone anonymously over the phone, in that case, help them reach out to a local domestic or sexual violence organization, or one of the national support helplines listed on the next page. You can also call the helplines to get support in how to help your friend.
Where to get help

National Dating Abuse Helpline
1-866-331-9474 or www.loveisrespect.org to chat with an advocate online

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-833-656-HOPE (4673) or www.rainn.org to chat with an advocate online

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255) or www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org to chat with a crisis counselor online

The Trevor Project
1-866-488-7386 for LGBTQ young people ages 13-24 or www.thetrevorproject.org to chat online

How to get involved with Our Gender Revolution
Learn how to get involved with Our Gender Revolution, a project of the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, by going to www.OurGenderRevolution.org to learn more.

For more information contact the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence 208-384-0419 or 1-888-293-6118.