

**parkmont
poetry
festival**

**Poems by
District of Columbia
Students**

Grades 6-12

**Sponsored by
Parkmont School**

'05

PREFACE

We are pleased to share with you in this booklet the poems of Washington, D.C.'s young writers. The Festival, sponsored by Parkmont School, was started in 1983 to recognize the artistic gifts of our young people and to bring them together from their many different schools and neighborhoods to celebrate what they share in common.

We received over 500 entries to this year's Festival from students in grades 6-12 in public and private schools in the District of Columbia. Following are the selections made by the judges. We are excited by the knowledge that the students represent but a small portion of the thousands of our youth who capture their spirit and vitality in poetry.

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White Sugar

White sugar

Falling from the sky

Sugar dusting the branches of trees

Melting quickly on my tongue

The world is sweet as sugar

Janethri Liyanage, Grade 6
Horace Mann School

Orange

The sun blazes from the sky.

The color orange comes to mind.

Little Notebook sticking out of drawer

It's bright orange.

Striped orange sheets hang over a messy bed.

Mixed with a dash of red.

A marker's tilt to the side orange and
bright, lights up your eyes. Paints your
fingers with an orange glow.

Orange dragon zig zagging far and wide.

In the night, of the robe that's black and
gold, that I'm sitting on as I write this
poem.

Evan Odoms, Grade 8
Parkmont School

World Peace

If the world
Was a glass vase
War was the person who cracked it.

Then peace was the loving mother
And small teary child
Who came
And fixed the vase
And put fresh daisies
To cover it up.

And war realized
The mistake
And apologized.

Catherine Yochum, Grade 6
Sidwell Friends School

A White Cross

A white cross by the side of the road
Rising out of a sea of teddy bears and flowers
A gray street lamp casts a monstrous shadow
Cars speed past, occupants uncaring

Rising out of a sea of teddy bears and flowers
Houses hide their eyes from the overcast day
Cars speed past, occupants uncaring
Stars run away, searching
for a permanent place in a country sky

Houses hide their eyes from the overcast day
Rain washes leaves into the sewer
Stars run away, searching
for a permanent place in a country sky
Leftover snow mounds in piles of dirty slush

Rain washes leaves into the sewer
Ice spreads like a contagion across cement steps
Leftover snow mounds in piles of dirty slush
A white cross by the side of the road

Michelle Wheatley, Grade 10
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

The Streets of Washington

Never to be sung
As fully as Cairo, as Amsterdam;
We listen.
We are not known for our music here.

Streetcars leave a path behind,
but where have the streetcars
Gone?
The freeway, the sky.
I walk along the edge of the city
Docks and splinters under my feet.
The river: muddy and brown.

Planes on the river, on the minute
Missile-men watch.
Companions to the white earbugs and
The motorcades,
Even the people this city is for.

Seagulls and pigeons and one lone eagle--
A man on the riverwalk points it out.
"It was us," he says, meaning the children
Of course he was one, a long time ago.
"We brought them back."

That's the white dome off in the distance
Wedding-cake architecture, I've heard it called.
There's a woman with a bird in her hands
Poor pigeon, its neck is snapped.

Colleen O'Brien, Grade 11
Lab School of Washington

The Black Dress

My mother wore a sparkly black dress
that revealed all her curves.
I loved the way she smiled at me,
showing all her white teeth.
My mother painted my nails, did my hair
I love that she cared.
My mother really smoked a lot,
but I never expected her to die.

I'll always remember that dress,
with her dark red lipstick,
black heels and stockings.
The way she walked made all the men smile.
She kissed me goodnight
in that flashy black dress.
The black dress took me by surprise.

Rhia Hardman, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

BEFORE

*I return to my spot of solitude watching,
waiting, for any sign of life
in the towering trees-
anything,
the smallest most shriveled leaf,
but alas, there is nothing,
before the ground was bare but still alive,
now it is choked by a frigid blanket of white,
before the leaf still clung to the brittle branches
of the plain tree,
before everything was as it should be,
before the harsh enemy of winter came,
before . . .*

Peter Estes, Grade 6
Horace Mann School

Chicken and Rice

Chicken and Rice
I don't have to think twice
Special occasions
Weddings
Birthdays
Graduations
Anniversaries

Good to taste
Can make in haste
Nothing to waste

Stomachs are full
People talking bull

There's plenty of punch
For the entire bunch

The rice was nice
And the chicken sufficed
When it's all said and done
The rice and chicken was part of the
family fun

Alexandra Acuna, Grade 8
Parkmont School

Arroz Con Pollo

Arroz Con Pollo
No hay segundo pensamiento
Ocasiones Especiales
Como Casamientos,
Cumpleanos
Graduaciones
Aniversarios

Bueno para saborear
Se prepara pronto
Con nada de desperdicio

Barrigitas Ilenas
Gente disfrutando y chismeando

Siempre hay ampleo frescos
Para todas las visitas

El arroz estuvo sabroso
y el pollo demasiado
Y al fin de todo
El Arroz con pollo fue parte de nuestra
familia

Alexandra Acuna, Grade 8
Parkmont School

Untitled

I saw the moon sinking into the shore tonight
As the clouds settled over its top
Saw the stars shattering and revealing that
Orion's belt is made of pleather
And how stupid were we to be so
Infatuated with the phenomena of it
Being the most identifiable constellation
In the sky.
The same sky that promised me the
Positive results of wishing on those
Stars that seem so innocent
From an ant's view.
The same sky that Van Gogh captured
And made the revelation to me that
I don't see it that way and I'm just
Feeling betrayed on the silent rides home
Where everything seems clear until you
See the moon sinking into the shore.
Boardwalk strolls with the moon leisurely plummeting
Into oblivion.

Meghan Harrigan, Grade 11
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Yeah, Right

My father loves to fish
I do too

He thinks he's better than me
but I doubt it

Last summer he caught one fish
and I caught ten

He says I am a bum
and I laugh and say

You're just mad I caught ten
and you caught one.

Erik Butler, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

The Smell of Spring

The smell of spring fills my nose
There is life everywhere
Dandelions brush up against my feet
The trees are no longer bare.

I see the trees around me
The smell of spring fills the air
My dog walks beside me;
A fresh breeze goes through my hair.

Branches cast a shadow
In the street and on the dirt
I feel the heat of the sun;
Sweat is dampening my shirt.

The smell of spring fills my nose
There is life everywhere
Dandelions brush up against my feet
The trees are no longer bare.

The ivy on a wall quivers
When the breeze touches its vines
I look up at the trees above me
Through the branches the sun shines.

The smell of spring fills my nose
There is life everywhere
Dandelions brush up against my feet
The trees are no longer bare.

Ben Butler, Grade 7
Sheridan School

Little Black Bird

In a big world, surrounded by
the largest
I'm a small, little black bird
who hasn't yet gotten her wings,
which everyone clearly thinks is absurd
As I walk down the street,
some birds often come down
to tease
To push me in a corner,
chase me around,
basically make a fool out of me
They shout, "You're no bird!
You have no wings! You'll never
Be able to fly"
"You'll never be able to soar like us,
you'll never reach the sky"
But what they don't know is
that someday I will be able to
do all of these things
I'll be able to fly, to soar way into
the sky as soon as I develop
my wings
And on this great day, they'll look
up over their heads with grins
To see that this beautiful, amazing bird
can fly right over them

Nikita Weaver, Grade 8
Garnet-Patterson Middle School

Courage

Courage is inevitable
unpredictable
a must.
Unlike weakness
shaking
running
sweating.
Courage is unlike
most things
like the triumph of youth
praying
hoping
waiting
survival.
Courage is a message
a strong stallion
walking tall.

Andre Tatum, Grade 9
Ballou Senior High School

Changed

It comes
The *what if* factor
Sorrow moves through the silent day
Of the unfocused time of memory
As you mourn the days of history
What if?
Midnight never comes
From the lonely life of poison
Through the fumes coming from the unseen riches
Inside of your treasure,
Wonder, think it over
What if?
Magic would now splash
Onto the phantom of the lost soul
Soon to be figured out, that it was mindful
Of the heavenly change, coming down as chaos
What if?
The number of your private moment
Of silver that has died
Into the wonder of a more distant death
Which is more precious than
The day of the mirror, of an asleep birth
What if?
The shining break points
Now coming down
As clouds in the night
To see the flutter
With my history
Curtains up, you got in now
What if?
My soul is gone

DeAndre Britten, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

Patches

I imagine while you was cleanin dey floors
you was scrubbin dey sins away
You know cleansin dey souls
And when he was shinin dey shoes,
why he was startin them on the right foot

Though you have been teacher for thirty-four years
You have been teaching me ever since
"You always comb your hair
before you touch that food"
Like "Liza, Liza bless the Lord"
My papa's been gone for almost a year
But I'm all right the world's wrong

I carry your voice with me when I pray
Like "I've got sunshine on a cloudy day"
Missin you my Grandma May
Lovely voice like Sarah Vaughn,
I was born tribute to-June

And though they called you "Trouble",
for all them fights
I think of my Daddy as a warrior
but right now he is battling himself
The era of Bush-Baby molded into a perfect fro
Columbia Road walks in the park
Matching Converse
Mommy, let me walk in your shoes

Drinking Puppy Tea when I am sick
"Your alright the world's wrong"

I imagine that when I am older
I can feed the stories of knowledge to my own
Homage to my family
A patch to a quilt
A process of being sewn

Zewiditu Ruffin, Grade 11
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

The Lady In The Tub

*A woman outside
In her warm cozy North Carolina blue tub.
A lazy Saturday afternoon.
Sun basks over her.
She reads a magazine
through black and silver sunglasses.
Wears a silver wedding ring,
gold necklace
matching earrings.
On her head a pink visor
graying hair stands a top
like a mountain covered with fresh snow.*

Tony Hynes, Grade 10
Parkmont School

Soothing Rain

*Oh how I wish for a Soothing Rain
To wash my soul of all its sins
Each drop glistening and luminescent
To wash away my blackening night
Each drop pure and divine
Leaving my soul sparkling and clean*

*I wait in this drought as time stretches by
And still no rain falls from the sky...
Oh how I wish for a soothing rain
Oh how I wish to feel again*

Colin Andrews, Grade 11
The Lab School of Washington

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

To whom it may concern

There are guns and drugs rampaging my street

Rapists and snipers terrify me

Sirens and alarms wake me up from my sleep

So much violence in my neighborhood

makes me want to weep

I look out my window and it's muggy and dark

I wish the sun would shine and break all darkness apart

Each day without happiness

I toss and turn

I write this letter

To Whom It May Concern

Racheida Lewis, Grade 8
Garnet-Patterson Middle School

The Survivor

Walking, running, flying in those lonely alleys,
Where every kid was a bell,
Where murder was my only salvation and
My salvation the suffering of my mother.

Every tree in the mountain was a place to escape.
Every rock was a weapon to kill, to protect my loved ones.

Families were suffering because of darkness. Surrender
Was not a choice - it was a way to live.

I can still hear the chickens calling for food,
The cows screaming for their men. I still hear
My grandmother calling me to wake up to go to school

I got out from there. I was happy when I did.
But now I miss my alleys, my lonely alleys,
where surviving was
My diploma of life.

Oscar Ascencio, Grade 12
Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School

My world

The days are long

Like infinity

My world is fulfilling

Like a writer doing a book

My walls die

Like a waterfall

Her jeans are as tight

As a fist

Raekala Middleton, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

Nocturnal Breaths

The night breathed above the Earth,
Its indigo lungs and purple lips pulsing,
With a harp heartbeat that was caught
in invisible veins,
And the echoes of the stars reached
terrestrial ears,
And touched silent skin,
And the stars scattered their light to
the darkness,
Like petals discarded by a dead flower,
Like clothes discarded by a swimmer,
Entering some unknown pool,
To pass over the undulating eyelids,
Of some strange sleeper,
The Morse code of his mind,
The sleeper's unconscious breaths,
Passing from the river of her throat,
To mingle with the winds,
With the indigo-silver air of the night,
Alive with nocturnal tides,
Alive with nocturnal breaths.

Aliza Cohen, Grade 12
The Lab School of Washington

Game

My heart holds 10 game pieces
that you have to play
to earn my love.

You have to work your way
across the board
in order to get a perfect score.

The rules are you can't cheat
or you lose.

My life is free
just like this space,
You're a winner
is written all across your face.

Mercedes Valentine, Grade 9
Ballou Senior High School

Where I'm From

I am from Scandinavia and Poland.
I'm from the open plains in Iowa,
the scorching heat of Texas,
the bustling streets of Bethesda,
and the cherry blossoms of Kenwood.

I am from Tavern On The Green
and The Cheesecake Factory.
I'm from the scent of fresh butter soft bread
and exotic foods being prepared by our cook.
I am from the crispy golden pizza
made fresh in our wood oven.

I'm from dogs, big and small,
Cats, skinny to pleasantly plump,
and horses rapid and dawdling.

Charles Meyer, Grade 9
Parkmont School

Deserted Island

If I were to take three things on a deserted island I would take the Library of Congress and a hatchet with a built in flint lighter because if I took a regular lighter it would run out of fuel. The third thing I would take would be Mexican actor Gael Garcia Bernal because my friend Rachel has a picture of him on her English notebook and I think he is cute. I figure he can cut the wood and lift the heavy objects while I lounge on the beach perusing the great works of human literature. Maybe it seems unfair but I have asthma, and that is the answer to all questions. If the Library of Congress has an electric generator then we can use it to watch his movies or not. We could play traditional Caribbean music because we would be on an island but I'm sure we would get sick of it soon. It is then we would listen to opera. In my spare time, I learn Portuguese but do not use it, because I am the only one on the island who can speak that language. I will read a lot of survival guides and how-to booklets so we can build a house in the trees, just like the Swiss Family Robinson even though neither of us are Swiss. It will involve a complex system of pulleys and levers and secret entrances so if pirates come we can protect ourselves, although honestly, I'm sure the pirates wouldn't be all that bad. If we have children we will build them a boat and send them to Harvard for college because, with the whole Library of Congress at their disposal I'm sure they would be incredibly smart. They would come visit us over Thanksgiving on their yachts and bring us news of the outside world and copies of the New York Times

crossword puzzle because I have already, in my old age, completed all of the crossword puzzles that are on file at the Library of Congress. They will offer to take us back to civilization but I refuse because I am happy there on the beach with my books. Gael Garcia Bernal, who never asked to come to the island and frankly resents my bringing him there, accepts their proposal and leaves me, though he has lived well since he arrived and he has enjoyed the time to read all of those books. He tries to restart his acting career but he is older and weathered from the sun and wind on the island, though he has not gotten fat. He works in dinner theater while I am still on the island, alone, watching the movies he made before I brought him to the island and moping. I lose a lot of weight because I don't have someone to get my food for me and live mostly off of coconuts because I am too lazy or old to go hunting though sometimes I set small traps for lizards or collect turtle eggs. When my children come back on their yacht to see me for Christmas, they see that the tree house they grew up in has been burnt to pieces, including the Library of Congress. It turns out those pirates were that bad after all and set the whole island on fire out of spite. My children cry and cry, but they are not sure whether it is more for me or for the greatest collection of human knowledge in the world.

Molly McArdle, Grade 12
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Words Wait

When I think
Of frozen letters
To become a word,
I don't just melt it
And call it something

I wait.

Thinking over the words
Rubbing them down with sandpaper
To discover what they really are
What they really mean.

When I pick words
I don't just wait with a sponge
Collecting as much water as it will hold.

I wait.

Pick my time to sponge it up
To squeeze it on to an empty page,
And watch the words form.

Now,
I am finished.

Gabe Singer, Grade 6
Sidwell Friends School

Where Anger Lives

Buildings where anger lives have displeasure
of dust and dirt

like a ceiling with holes in it

dirty water dripping from it

or doors with rusted nails hanging out.

To be anger, you must mope around

all day with a mug on your face

or just have an attitude with everyone.

On the street where anger lives are dull houses

of busted windows and chipped paint

on the rooftops.

In their garden stands a tall, bony tree

with no leaves, and only dirt around it.

Emma Stewart, Grade 12
Ballou High School

Dinner

The onions spit and crackle
while sister gently shifts and turns
them about in the old cast-iron pan.
A puff of white steam blooms as
mother lifts the silver lid
and checks the jasmine rice.
She tells me to light the candles.

I flick off the white overhead lights,
cut the blaring power that comes
through the walls, from elsewhere.

And now we three women
sit around our kitchen table
and the small firelights
make the faces glow.
Hot rice and hot chicken
lift pale dancing arms
from their bowls.

Laura Mattison, Grade 12
Georgetown Day School

Beautiful Noise

Empty streets die, bruise, and battered.
Obese teens eat less and get fatter.
Broken bottles and needles scrape along the playground by
preschoolers.
Soldiers gun down by the hands of their ruler.

The District.

Boarded windows creak whenever winter pays a visit.
Teen mother cries at the free clinic.
Sirens cry through the streets and
North Faces scatter through the allies.
Bullet shells fall to the ground like dead bodies.
Doors slam together at city prison.
Husbands beat on their wives for no reason.
The government worries about forming an alliance.
Will there ever be end to black on black violence?

Murder capital.

Rest in peace Biggy, Pun and Tupac, too bad you're gone.
As you pass through the gates your family will mourn.
It's not our fault that our economy is bad.
It's a shame how a woman play both mom and dad.

Antonio Vance, Grade 11
Cesar Chavez Public Charter High School

in this cold dark room

in this cold dark room
the floors creak and crack
the wind howls and whistles
through the window
shadows graze the room
and make me feel cold
like a windy day in April
but much scarier
it feels as if you're trapped
and captured like an experiment
it's so dark
I can't see, not even
my hands in front of me

Kristina Bourn, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

LISTEN UP

This goes out 2 all the young ladies
who carry in babies.
Man, that ain't cool.
What about you and school.
If you would have followed the rules,
You wouldn't be in this position.
So, now you stuck with this baby.
Screamin and cryin all crazy
Hours of the night
You already know you havin this baby wasn't right
But you listened to what this guy said
Don't be stupid.
Now is the time to wise up
Because you can't give up
Give up on your baby.
That is because you don't want
your baby to make the same mistakes that you did.
That would be crazy and weird.
Momma didn't raise no fool,
But I do know that havin a baby at a young age
Ain't Cool.

Jasmine Butler, Grade 7
Garnet-Patterson Middle School

Maybe there's an Italian restaurant in heaven

my uncle takes a solid sheet of pasta
dipped in flour
lies it flat over one hand
and with the other feeds it to a small machine
that divides it into equal even strands

his name for me is Little Rabbit
he asks if I'd like to help
hoists me up onto the counter
and I help thread the next one through

this is my first memory of a family thanksgiving
no turkey
but plates heaping with
noodles in red sauce
with olives, mushrooms, and parmesan
my uncle at the head of the table
face pink with wine and laughter
filling up with the meal he made

my mother spoke at the service
some months later.
the way she put it,
that thanksgiving
there was no place for cancer at the table

Kelsey Elving, Grade 11
Georgetown Day School

Baseball

I can still remember everything that happens when I play.
I can feel the sharp swing of my bat like a spring uncoiling
the hard but sweet feeling of a successful catch,
the crowd screaming at me all the time.
When I play pitcher I remember
the weird feeling on my hand
when I release the ball,
the popping sound that the ball makes
as it hits the mitt,
and the pump of the bat when I swing.

This is Baseball

Mike Dragnich, Grade 6
Horace Mann School

Dance of My Dreams

When I go to sleep, I think of dancing
In the dust of a mirror, reflecting my fears.
My pain is like a cat; you never can figure them out.
My fear is like a mole in a dark, deep hole.
My mind is asking me why I am hurting
with no cuts or bruises.
When I figured it out, it was like a bitter taste
of peanut butter.
It was because I was dancing from my dreams
Going into an endless valley of dark shadows.
People I loved flooded my mind, dead or alive.
They came, but when I woke up it was over.
I was in the comfort of my house, away from the dancing
and away from my dreams.
I dread when the day will come that my dreams come true.
But I'm not scared of the people, I'm scared of the
dance of my dreams.

Shakia Brockenberry, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

Fear

As the nervous crowd mingles,
Fear swaggers into the middle.
The moon blinks and the stars peak,
As fear chides the unafraid.
The lights cower and dim
While the fog sits up straight,
And fear writes its name in titillating shivers
on the faces of those who see.
Smoke gushes into gardens,
And fear replaces roses.

Ben Buchbinder, Grade 10
St. John's College High School

Samson and Delilah

I can never go out on a Friday night.

I can never stay out beyond the light.

My parents believe I'm too young to think.

They're afraid I go out to smoke and drink.

I'm not thinking of doing anything wrong.

I'm not going to be in this house very long.

I'll spread my wings and fly away.

Though I'll think of this place day after day.

I can't stand to act like I'm still just a kid.

They act like they love me but they want to get rid

Of a son whose hair is getting too long.

I'm afraid if I cut it I won't be as strong.

Jesse Champ, Grade 7
Parkmont School

Initiation

Her figure never looked
So disgusting in a mirror
A full length,
a full width
and she hated to see herself.
She turned her back on her reflections
On her knock knees
And her flabby arms
To eat, to don't eat
Won't depend on the size of her shirts
She hides the size of her jeans
In her smile her ignorance
She denies the measurement of her waist
In her creativity of her wit
But in her mind
She's still this helpless little girl
With no one to turn to
But her three skinny brothers and
Last year she found herself alone
Last month she stopped crying
Last week she initiated self-worth
Last night she wrote this poem, and
Tonight she'll read it to you.

Carenda Tillery, Grade 12
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Wordless Woman

The dreams upset her,
But she still says nothing of them
To the famed, and only, doctor
In her small village,
The man with whom she shares a bed,
Who has lost the fingers on his right hand
When the village learned of war
In its previous generation.

He performs miracles
On all of those who have fallen since then,
Confined to a life spent supine in bed,
Watching the sun sink into the soil
Between two palm trees
Through a window without shutters.

All of this until he comes to their bedside,
Soon, then, they are free to die under the
same sun,
Only now they are trapping fish in a
homemade net,
Bathed waist-high in saltwater.
"Thank you", they say, pressing their own
salty tears
From their hands into his one hand.

This whole island life is a dream, already, she says,
There is no place for hers,
Though still, they come.

One night, she walks down the sand,
Village dark behind her.
She walks further, until her head is lost beneath
the water,
Leaving the curses of her dreams behind her.

She is the first woman in this village to die
Since before the war,
But there will be another, and her body will wait
In the water for all of the other wordless women,

Who will know better than to try and speak,
And will all come running down the sand.

No cries or gunshots are heard,
Only the cautious knocking of the heart
Against the ribs,
Asking to be let in.

Elizabeth Alida Stern, Grade 12
Duke Ellington School of the Arts

Sunrise

Knee-deep in smoke, drowned in muck,

and rocks scattered

night falls short, and was absent

as the moon sets, it is impenetrable

Hérons and minnows joined as one

as they spring on the window's sunlit ledge

they are the sun, a spirit lamp

who did kiss the sky with oranges.

The smell is sensational.

Jessica Carpenter, Grade 8
Hart Middle School

Autobiography

I fell asleep with a feather
In my hair and the room was all silence
I got up and started looking at Dany Phantom
And listening to the glory gospel CD
(I listen to music 24/7)
I have four mirrors in my house
I took a glimpse
At some of my Christmas stuff
I am a distance from getting a D,
I have a lot of sad moments.

LaJean Pratt, Grade 7
Hart Middle School

If You Want to Know

If you're askin if I need you

The answer is forever

If you're askin if I'll leave you

The answer is never

If you're askin what I value

The answer is you

If you're askin if I love you

The answer is I do.

Stephanie Ratiff, Grade 9
Sasha Bruce Public Charter School

NOTES

NOTES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Parkmont Poetry Festival wishes to thank the judges:

Faye Moskowitz is a professor and Chair of the English Department at George Washington University, a memoirist and short story writer. Her most recent book is *Peace in the House*.

Gigi Bradford received an MFA in Poetry from Iowa Writers Workshop. She worked as a Poet-in-the-Schools for 18 years in 8 different states, and ran the Academy of American Poets in New York, and the Folger Shakespeare Library Poetry Program. She was Literature Director of the National Endowment for the Arts and directed a think tank for the arts called Center for Arts and Culture. She lives in D.C. with her family.

Kwame Alexander is the author of eight books, including *Kupenda: Love Poems*, *Do The Write Thing: 7 Steps to Publishing Success*, and the just-published *Dancing Naked on the Floor: poems*. The founder of the independent press, BlackWords, Alexander is also a playwright, publishing consultant and lecturer. He has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Detroit Metro-Times*, and on BET Tonight with Tavis Smiley. More recently, Alexander is the creator of a new television show in partnership with Paramount Television.

With sincere gratitude we wish to thank the following donors for their support of the Festival this year:

Cari Gradison, for her donation in memory of her mother, Corinne Miller Adams Elliott, who loved poetry; Chevy Chase Bank, McLean Branch; Clyde's Restaurant Group for the Festival T-shirts; Jan Ferguson, typing and layout of the poetry booklet; Kim Schraf, editing, Service Employees International Union, printing.

We wish to thank our donors for their support in past years: The Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, The Jenny McKean Moore Fund, and The D.C. Commission on the Arts & Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

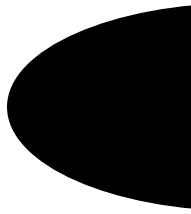
The Festival wishes to thank Ron McClain, Founder of the poetry festival and Head of Parkmont School; Judy Lentz, Poetry Festival Coordinator; and Sharan Strange, 2005 Poetry Festival Moderator, former Parkmont School teacher, winner of the Barnard New Women Poets Prize for her collection, *Ash*, and a 2004 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award for *Forgiveness*, a new manuscript-in-progress. She is currently assistant professor of English at Spelman College.

PARKMONT SCHOOL

Parkmont School is a small private school with a middle school for grades 6-8 and an upper school for grades 9-12. Parkmont is an educational community that fosters individual growth and enthusiasm for learning and believes there is nothing more basic to the development of a person than a positive sense of self-esteem.

Parkmont's respect for the creative energies and contributions of young people is the driving force behind the Poetry Festival and other school activities that are part of its program.

Parkmont students learn practical work skills in an internship program that puts them in offices, shops and organizations around the city. At school, students participate in all-school meetings that focus on ethical and practical problems that confront their community. They contribute to decisions about what they will study during the academic year. Their courses often include field trips and a variety of hands-on activities that make learning relevant and vibrant. Parkmont helps students discover their talents and values. The Poetry Festival encourages students to give voice to their dreams and concerns.



ParkmontSchool

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