INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE

2022

Poetry Collection

By Students of The School District of Philadelphia
The Strive For Peace

By Jack Zhou

Peace starts with the building of bridges,
The disregarding of one another’s race and religion.
It starts with a simple dream of all people interconnecting,
And it will end with the whole of humanity resurrecting.

The strive for peace is like crossing an arid desert.
It will not come easy, without pain, or without effort.
But by persevering through this path,
We will not have to suffer violence's wrath.
Outlandish Peace

By Nekiel Jackson-Butler

Vile inscriptions maintain a presence in the currents of our society
Witnessing eyes/closed lips
Abrasive fabrics of identity crumble up in the presence of phenotypic proponents.
Unspoken cautious treading within foreign boundaries far from the confined redlines; too alert
Being vigilant can only serve so much good
But how great would the absence of it feel?
The nostalgic abyss that belies any prior constructed binaries.
I am uncertain what that may look like and where I may go from here.
Instead of the constant need to do more, I may just be able to learn to rest.
Yet, this blissfully braw billow can not cradle me for long.
Fulfilling the necessary at present in no way ensures that the future will follow suit.

Then will come when it needs to but for now,
Here we are.
“American Dream”

By Kaddy Ren

McCall
sixty percent Asian blue ribbon school
everyone knows my name
Kaddy Ren
I wear it proudly like my cleanest white shirt
There I am
Kaddy Ren in every class, every musical, and back to school night
Selling handmade charms at 3rd-grade lunch
when $20 was the most money I ever had at one time.
In another multiverse, I would have been the lead in McCall’s 2018 musical
Three-time Honorary Safety Patrol Officer
President of the Student Council
But I left,
Without hesitation
I left.

Masterman
Too shiny to deny
Some friends carry over
but I am not the same Kaddy, instead
Catty? Is that ethnic?
Kaddy— it rolls off their tongues like sacrilege.

I get my first smartphone
It's shattered in its first two weeks

I get a room all to myself
But no friends to invite
I go home alone for the first time
And learn to take the long route so as to not run into any Big Kids or people from school
I go to school the next day and the day after that and the day after that—an American dream.

She is still there where
I was happy
Leaning on her father’s shoulder
Singing American songs that only the two of them could hear over the sound of the bus’s AC and motor
With layers of sweatshirts over her white polo and blue leggings.
I wish I could reunite with Kaddy Ren once more
Tell her hold on to your family’s native language
Cherish the hallways you will struggle to remember one day
Look out for others like you
Correct people until they get it right
Have faith in the universe and yourself that there will come a day when you can finally feel all taken care of.
"I Can’t Breathe"

By Violet M.

We all need to breathe. So why does it feel like I’m suffocating? Why does it feel like every time I step out of my house I’m walking on eggshells? Why does my body tense up every time I see a cop car? Don’t we all bleed red? Don’t we all have muscle, and bones? Why is it that this alarm has been ringing for 147,252 days and we are still fighting? Fighting for ourselves. And fighting for our community. I will stay fighting. Until the alarm turns off. Until there is peace.
Once upon a time, we dreamed of a place with peace and love. We found that place. And we took it. And we turned it into the word we know today. We demolished it. People tried to fight back. Tried to do what we should. But systems were put in place to keep those people down. From that seed grew racism, sexism, homophobia, and hatred. These things were able to achieve a more “perfect” union, but only to those who could barely see. So far away from the problem, it was only a spec of dust. But they were wrong.

There were mountains and mountains of problems. So when the dust settled this is what it was like: Some sit, some stand, some work, some relax, some have basic human rights, and some don’t. And that was that. Until we realized that silence was not beauty or tranquility. It was just hatred, pain, and misery.

We, the people, arrived and we changed it. We gave them perspective. We took what was rightfully ours. And from that sprouted beautiful real authentic peace. We took the world into our arms like a child crying after horrific events. We took this world and it brought us so much closer to victory. We are not there. We may never get there. But we are better. We formed a more perfect union. We did not fix it. We changed it. We are now like a rushing river, always moving, bringing prosperity and life. A beautiful thing. Beautiful I am. Beautiful you are. Beautiful we are.
Taking the Shackles

By Akofa D.

I'm taking back my fear.
I'm taking back my happiness.
I'm taking back the ability to express myself
I'm taking back the keys and unlocking the cell you left me to rot in,
So you could mold my corpse into a false image for my descendants to see.

I will take back all that you took from me.
I will walk free with no passed down shackles on my feet.
I'm ending the cycle.

Generations after me will feel pride and not shame,
They will understand their self-worth is more than what they are told.
So when they try to knock us down, we will not fall into the cruel stereotypes and assumptions

We deserve peace
We deserve joy
We deserve not to be heckled and taunted.
We deserve to live our lives without fearing you

I'm taking back my right to be me
I'm taking back freedom
I'm taking off the shackles you put on my great-great somethings’ feet.
Children

By Hidaia Ali

I was once
Playing in dirt sand or just looking up in the sky
   Beyond you and me
   What do you really see
Is it the truth that lies beneath your beauty?
Skin glows radiantly regardless of what shade
Together can’t we play?
Mother told me once
that there is something that keeps us apart
   I do not understand
   Far as my mind will reach
I know we have many ways that we are in common don’t you see?
   My heart beats allowing me to breathe
   All the wonderful smells that greet me
   You do the same
   My eyes allow me to see not only who is standing in front of me
Views of mountains that stretch far across the land that my very feet will meet
   You do the same
   Allowing me to walk to places I desire the most
   Sitting under the sun so close to the ones I love the most
   You do the same
So tell me what difference is there between you and me
Regardless of personality why won’t you speak to me
History will only repeat if we don’t change the script
   Of lies and publicity
   Beyond the eyes of those who do not believe
   That you and I cannot stand hand in hand
Because together we will let the children of tomorrow
   Play in the dirt or sand and look up into the sky
   Because in all honesty
   Mother was wrong
   We are all one big family
My poem is about Black Lives Matter

By Yajaira Polite

and in black lives matter
they killed George Floyd and Brianna Taylor
the cops and the cops sprayed pepper spray
and they Trevon Martin they also broke in to stores
and all lives matter and our skin it
also so much hate in the world and it also black people in
the world and white people and chinese people Spanish
people and Russian people and English people and
French and people
different people all over the world
and people also said no justice no peace
and I don’t why is so much hate in the world
and Pnb Rock got shot and robbed.
All I want is peace.

Not having to put my hands up and get shot because of a brush.

All I want is peace.

Not having to worry about the police accusing me of something I didn't do.

All I want is peace.

Not having to worry about the police coming into my home and killing me.

Can I get that? Can I get peace?

It’s my skin color that scares you, right?

My hood is up because of the cold. But instead, I have to raise my hands and get on my knees.

All I want is peace.
Females are like flowers just dying to be picked,
But like Mirrors once broken they can't be fixed.

She wants to be loved and treated right
Yet when you're angry you wanna fight

She cries in the mirror wondering what she did wrong...

1,2 Then she hears a Dong
3,4 here comes her favorite song
5,6 She just wants to get along
7,8 She wants to be strong
9,10 Does she even belong?

She wipes her tears and sighs in regret
And repeats those words as if she’s an addict

Females are like flowers just dying to be picked,
But like Mirrors once broken they can't be fixed.
Differences

By Arianna Torres

I am a girl,
Just like billions of others
I bleed red,
Just like billions of others
My hair is brown,
Just like billions of others

We all start out as babies,
Wondering where we are
All of our minds aren’t fully developed
We can only get so far
So we rely on our parents to help
But just like billions of others,
Sometimes they don’t

We all have different problems
We all have different opinions
All of us our human with our own emotions
All of us are human with our own reactions
All of us are valid
All of us are loved

Just because we are different
Does not mean we are bad
One normal is not the same as another
One person is never the same as another
But with each difference
Comes all kinds of appreciation

Racism tells us our differences are wrong
It tells us to hate and hurt
But as kids as we love everyone
We are not born racist and instead it is taught
But as we grow we now think our own thoughts
End Racism, Build Peace

By Aaliyah Gordon-Valentin

END RACISM, BUILD PEACE!!!!

RACISM IS VERY BAD AND RUDE TO BLACK PEOPLE AND HISPANIC PEOPLE. BUILD PEACE WITH THEM AND BE FRIENDS WITH US BLACK AND HISPANIC PEOPLE, SO END RACISM AND BUILD PEACE!!!!!!!
Untitled

By Keiton Dressler

Oh how I wish for people to roam free, where a world would not treat
gun violence like a fish in the sea
The wrongly accused, and the absent minded, please let people be
unbined, by the racism that follows, leaving people’s hearts so
hollow, did studies teach us nothing at all?

History shouldn’t repeat with better technology,
Racism should be stopped, don’t leave a stain on the studies of
anthropology
Its inhumane to put others below you
Equality is what this world needs
Not more obstacles to hurdle,

With communities and all, Schools and buses,
In the end I hope no person, because of who they are, goes
distrusted.
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