

# Griot

NOVEMBER/  
DECEMBER  
2016

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SUPER WOMEN  
OF 2016/17



NEW BROTHERS  
ON THE YARD

## MELANINARES ALL OVER CSU

- UWC empowering women and melanin
- Making the walk to change the world
- Alpha Phi Alpha members Q & A's
- The winner for the Spoken word, interviewed
- Stressfree finals week, thanks to the dogs



GPS FAMILIES  
AT MLK MARCH

# UWC WEEK

Written by: Shannon Martin

Every semester, United Women of Color, presents a week dedicated to enlightening the Colorado State student body on what UWC is and what they do. United Women of Color is an organization that aims to cater to underrepresented women of color around campus. It is made up of strong and underrepresented women who come together to make a positive change in the community, through service and programming. This year UWC kicked off the fall semester with a week full of events on Monday all the way until Sunday.



# Monday: Love is not an STD

To kick off the week, UWC invited Egypt to host a workshop called 'Love is not an STD', which focused on generational relationships and the flaws within them. Egypt is a well-known speaker who has written books, traveled to many countries and has hosted various workshops about love, relationships and romance. His success as an African American man, who encountered many setbacks in his early life, is inspiring to those who hear it.

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# Tuesday: Rec Night

Members went to the CSU campus rec center to enjoy multiple activities such as Zumba, Dance class, Weight Lifting and Volleyball. This was a great time for members to de-stress and be in community with one another.



## *Wednesday: All Org Game Night*

The women hosted an 'All Org Game Night' catering to the organizations that are affiliated with the Black/African American Cultural Center such as United Men of Color, Black Student Alliance, and Africans United. They all came out and participated in games, fun and laughter and a chance to win a prize!

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## *Thursday: Life After Panel*

UWC invited some alumni to hold an open Q&A about what life was like for them after college. They prepared questions for the attendees and opened the floor for them to gain some knowledge that may help them with their personal experiences. Both male and female alumni were a part of the panel and had various post-college experiences. From graduate school, to marriage, babies, new cities and states or going home after graduation. They even welcomed back Ms. Colorado, Shannon Patilla.

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## *Friday: Pure Romance Party*

The ladies held a pure romance party to learn a little bit of sex education. They brought in a professional party host and created a fun, safe, and educational environment for the women in attendance.

## *Saturday: All White Affair*

Thanks to ASCSU, the ladies were able to wrap up their UWC week with a concert welcoming four lovely and talented women of color. The event was held in the Lory Student Center Ballroom. This is one of UWC's biggest events as they always try to welcome a woman of color to the stage who aligns with the organizations values. This year the ladies welcomed Dondria Nicole, JayD Ink, Cherae Leri, and CSU's very own Shyann Lee!

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## *Sunday: Fall Concert*

Thanks to ASCSU, the ladies were able to wrap up their UWC week with a concert welcoming four lovely and talented women of color. The event was held in the Lory Student Center Ballroom. This is one of UWC's biggest events as they always try to welcome a woman of color to the stage who aligns with the organizations values. This year the ladies welcomed Dondria Nicole, JayD Ink, Cherae Leri, and CSU's very own Shyann Lee!

This was one of United Women of Color's most successful UWC weeks in past years as majority of their events brought in 50 to 100 attendees.

Many of the members of the organization, as well as community members, relayed positive feedback about the week as a whole. Thank you to everyone who came out to support!



# GIVING THANKS KICK B/ACC

WRITTEN BY: YASMINE AMON

The Friday before Fall Break, the Black/African American Cultural Center hosted a Kick Back for students to engage in fun and relaxing activities. There was a card-making table, where students could write thank-you letters for people who have positively impacted their life, whether they were a professor, parent, mentor or friend. Students could create their own snack with a trial-mix inspired table that had marshmallows, nuts, chocolate chips, pretzels, popcorn, M&Ms and raisins. During this time, the animated movie, Zootopia, was playing which drew quite a crowd. Students also used this time to say goodbye to their peers before leaving for break. Overall, it was a warm and welcoming environment. Thank you to Sametra Woods, Ahonsi Ohimai and everyone else who helped to put this together.

# DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SPOKEN WORD CONTEST

Written by: Yasmine Amon

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ON NOVEMBER 30TH , THE BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER HOSTED A SPOKEN WORD CONTEST AND THE WINNER WAS CHOSEN TO PRESENT THEIR POEM ON MLK JR. DAY ON JANUARY 16 TH . HOSTED BY ABRIYANA SENTER AND MUSICAL STYLINGS BY KENT WASHINGTON WHO SET THE TONE FOR THE NIGHT. OUR PARTICIPANTS WERE ARISSON STANFIELD, MICHELLE MENDOZA, ISAIAH MARTIN, T'HANI MIDDLETON-HOLT, WALAA SAEED, ISAIAH MARTIN AND AHJINA HOPKINS. THE THEME WAS 'JUSTICE NOW' AND MICHELLE MENDOZA WON THE CONTEST WITH HER CAPTIVATING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING POEM. THANK YOU TO IVAN HUBBARD AND JORDAN LOGAN FOR PUTTING ON THIS EVENT.

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DEASH  
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2013

# THE PLEDGE

Michelle Mendoza

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I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE  
TO THE FLAG  
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
....EXCEPT THAT THE STATE OF AMERICA IS  
ANYTHING BUT UNITED  
UNLESS I GUESS IF YOU DON'T HAVE MY SKIN  
THIS PIGMENT IS MEANT TO BE SIN  
SO LET'S ASSUME THESE THINGS BEFORE I  
BEGIN:

THIS NOT THE ABSENCE OF COLOR,  
RATHER THE SPECTRUM BLENDS THROUGH  
AND FOR THIS THOSE PAINTED WITH SUCH ARE  
BOTH TARGETS AND OUTCASTS  
EXPECTED TO REAP NO BENEFITS BUT WORK TO  
THE BONE AND STILL OUTLAST  
THE DECK THAT MAKES THE DEALER OF THE  
SYSTEM UNSURPASSED  
THE STRENGTH IN THESE SHADES ARE FOR  
EXPLOITATION ONLY

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ANYTHING ELSE IS NOTHING SHORT OF UNHOLY  
SEE THE MARKED HAVE NO RIGHTS.

NO, SEE THIS FLAG ONLY FLIES FOR THE FEW  
AND PRIVILEGED WHITE

KNIGHTS OF FREEDOM AND LIBERATION  
BUT SOMEHOW THE NATIVES DON'T EVEN  
REMEMBER ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE IN  
BIRTHING A NATION.

WAIT. BACK TO THE PROCLAMATION  
TO THE REPUBLIC

FOR WHICH IT STANDS  
IGNORING THE HEARTS, MOUTHS, AND HANDS  
ALL THE PARTS OF THOSE THAT DON'T FIT THE  
PROTOTYPE AMERICAN

REMOVE ALL THE PIECES THAT DON'T FIT THE  
PLAN:

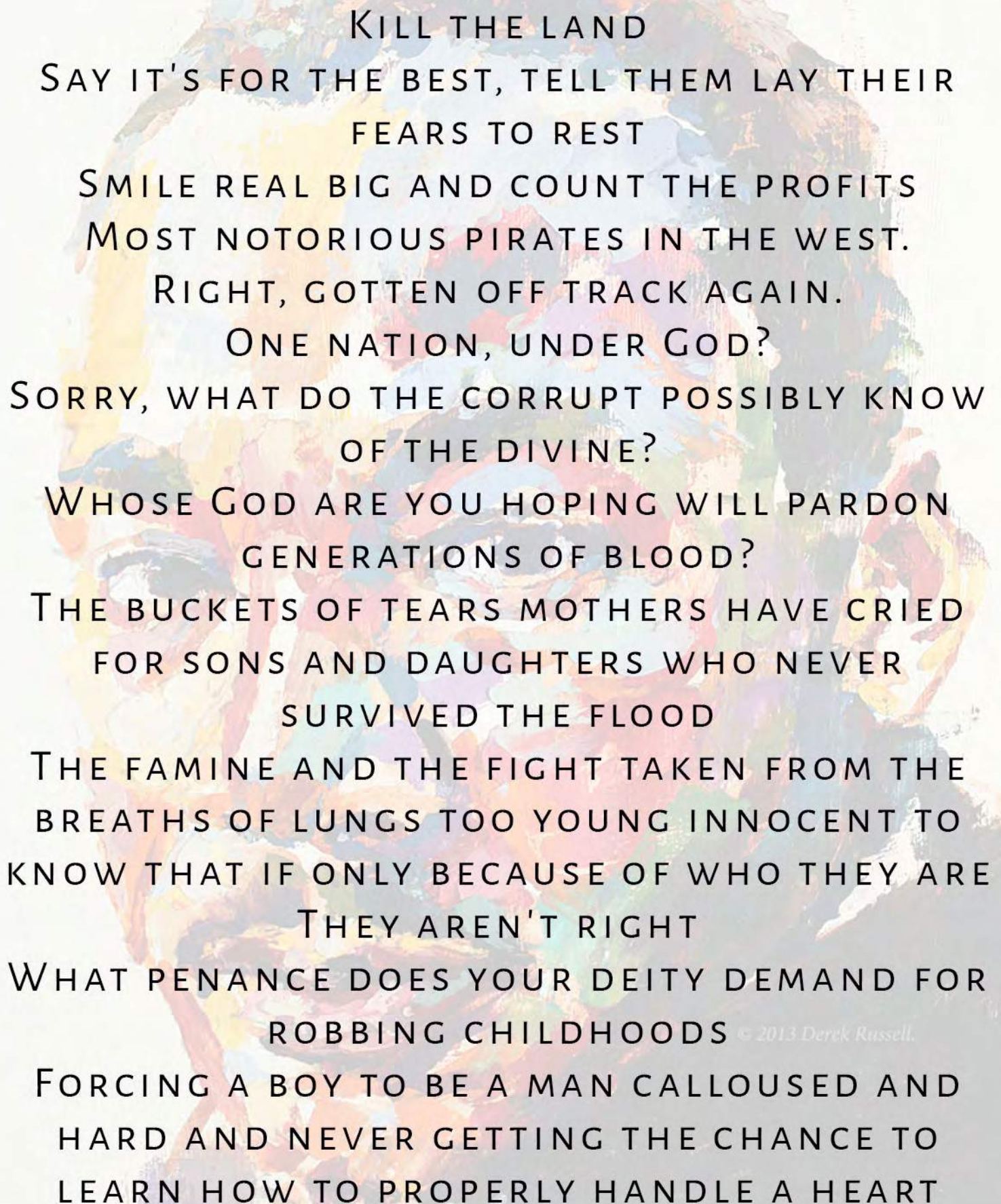
FIRST ARRIVE.

STEAL, NO BORROW, NO TAKE THE LAND.

BRING THE WOMEN, STRIP THE CULTURE,  
PRETEND A RACIST MASCOT MAKES YOU A REAL  
FAN

AND TOP IT ALL OFF WITH A PIPELINE BELOW  
WHAT'S LEFT

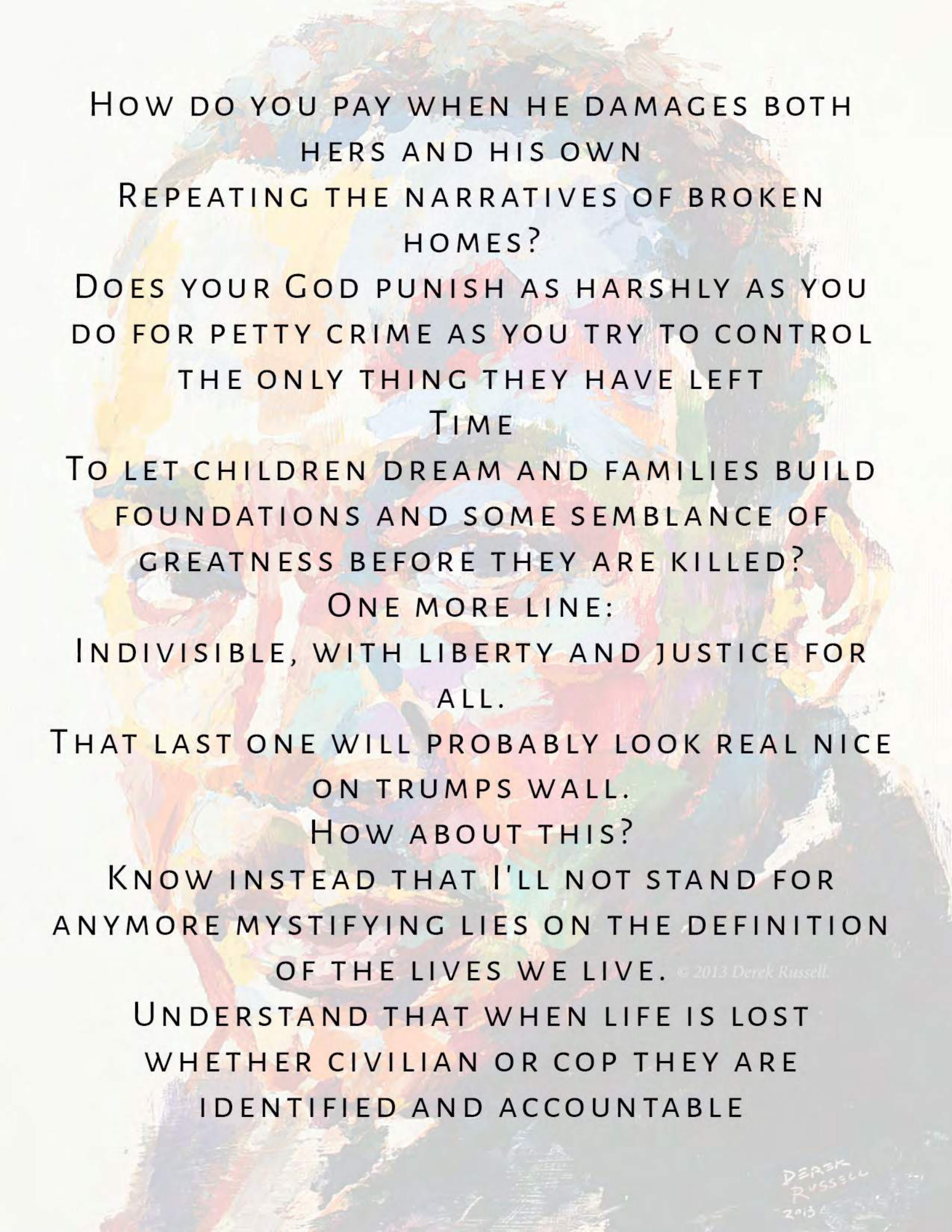
DEASH  
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2018



KILL THE LAND  
SAY IT'S FOR THE BEST, TELL THEM LAY THEIR  
FEARS TO REST  
SMILE REAL BIG AND COUNT THE PROFITS  
MOST NOTORIOUS PIRATES IN THE WEST.  
RIGHT, GOTTEN OFF TRACK AGAIN.  
ONE NATION, UNDER GOD?  
SORRY, WHAT DO THE CORRUPT POSSIBLY KNOW  
OF THE DIVINE?  
WHOSE GOD ARE YOU HOPING WILL PARDON  
GENERATIONS OF BLOOD?  
THE BUCKETS OF TEARS MOTHERS HAVE CRIED  
FOR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WHO NEVER  
SURVIVED THE FLOOD  
THE FAMINE AND THE FIGHT TAKEN FROM THE  
BREATHS OF LUNGS TOO YOUNG INNOCENT TO  
KNOW THAT IF ONLY BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE  
THEY AREN'T RIGHT  
WHAT PENANCE DOES YOUR DEITY DEMAND FOR  
ROBBING CHILDHOODS  
FORCING A BOY TO BE A MAN CALLOUSED AND  
HARD AND NEVER GETTING THE CHANCE TO  
LEARN HOW TO PROPERLY HANDLE A HEART

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HOW DO YOU PAY WHEN HE DAMAGES BOTH  
HERS AND HIS OWN  
REPEATING THE NARRATIVES OF BROKEN  
HOMES?

DOES YOUR GOD PUNISH AS HARSHLY AS YOU  
DO FOR PETTY CRIME AS YOU TRY TO CONTROL  
THE ONLY THING THEY HAVE LEFT  
TIME

TO LET CHILDREN DREAM AND FAMILIES BUILD  
FOUNDATIONS AND SOME SEMBLANCE OF  
GREATNESS BEFORE THEY ARE KILLED?

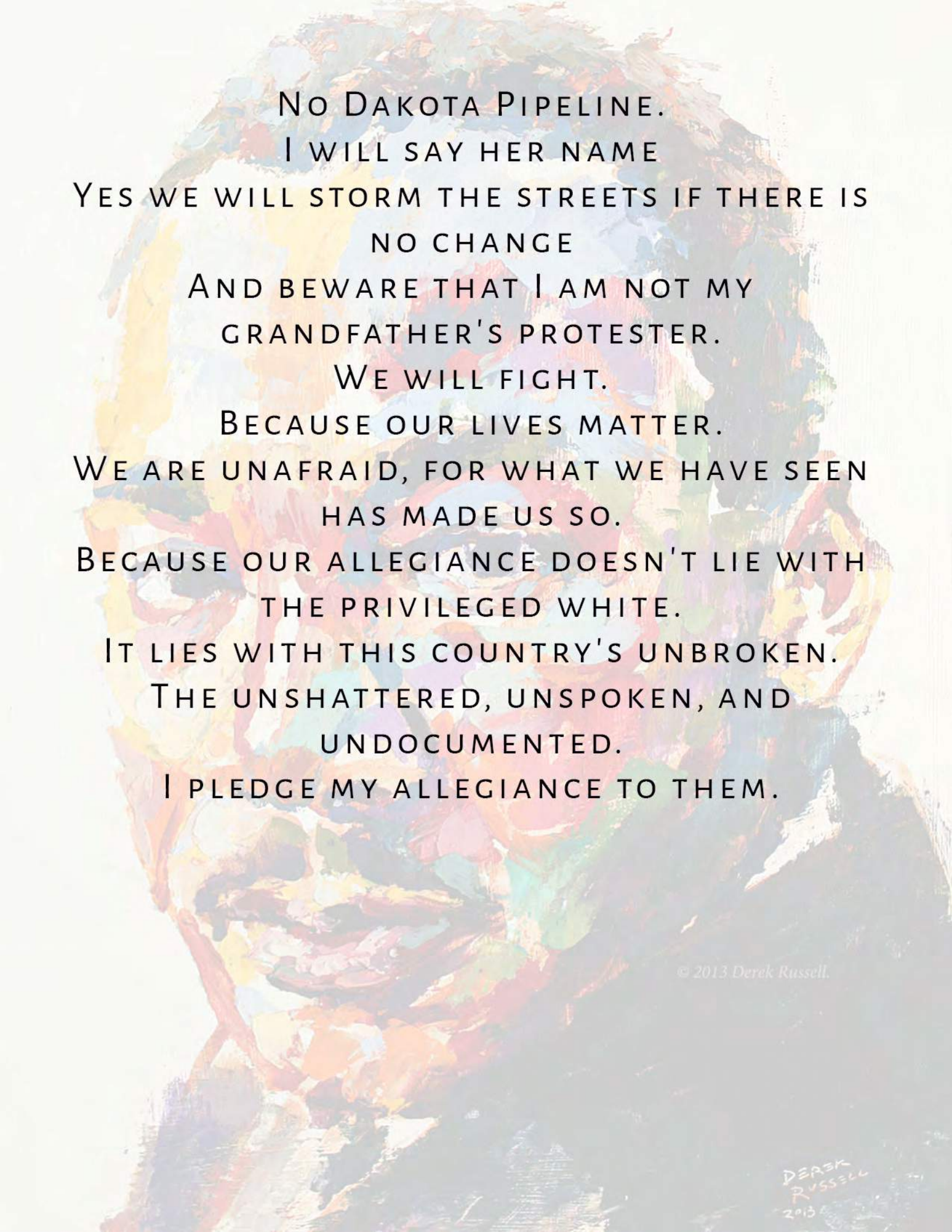
ONE MORE LINE:  
INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR  
ALL.

THAT LAST ONE WILL PROBABLY LOOK REAL NICE  
ON TRUMPS WALL.  
HOW ABOUT THIS?

KNOW INSTEAD THAT I'LL NOT STAND FOR  
ANYMORE MYSTIFYING LIES ON THE DEFINITION  
OF THE LIVES WE LIVE. © 2013 Derek Russell.

UNDERSTAND THAT WHEN LIFE IS LOST  
WHETHER CIVILIAN OR COP THEY ARE  
IDENTIFIED AND ACCOUNTABLE

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NO DAKOTA PIPELINE.  
I WILL SAY HER NAME  
YES WE WILL STORM THE STREETS IF THERE IS  
NO CHANGE  
AND BEWARE THAT I AM NOT MY  
GRANDFATHER'S PROTESTER.  
WE WILL FIGHT.  
BECAUSE OUR LIVES MATTER.  
WE ARE UNAFRAID, FOR WHAT WE HAVE SEEN  
HAS MADE US SO.  
BECAUSE OUR ALLEGIANCE DOESN'T LIE WITH  
THE PRIVILEGED WHITE.  
IT LIES WITH THIS COUNTRY'S UNBROKEN.  
THE UNSHATTERED, UNSPOKEN, AND  
UNDOCUMENTED.  
I PLEDGE MY ALLEGIANCE TO THEM.

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2013

# ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY INC. PROBATE

WRITTEN BY: YASMINE AMON

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. hosted a Probate, in order to introduce their new members. What is a probate you ask? It is defined as “the official proving of a will” or “to establish the validity of” something. Many community members traveled from other areas such as Greeley and Denver to attend. The lecture hall filled up with many students, friends and family members. The anticipation grew as the audience waited for the Alphas to come on stage and cheers erupted when the current members of Alpha Phi Alpha led the new members down the aisle. They were dressed in all black with gold masks to concealed their identity. The performance consisted of the new members singing and dancing on stage and in the end revealed themselves as Vance Payne, Isaiah Martin, Jordan Logan, Ahonsi Ohimai and Stephaun Mack Gaddis. Congratulations to the new members of Alpha Phi Alpha!

**HOW DID IT FEEL WHEN YOU REVEALED  
YOURSELVES AS THE NEW MEMBERS OF ALPHA  
PHI ALPHA?**

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**VANCE  
PAYNE**

“ Finally getting to be at the Probate and be able to reveal myself and show off all the hard work we did was one of the most satisfying feelings I've ever had. The passion and energy you saw us demonstrate is simply the result of pride and hard work that comes with being an Alpha Man.”  
-Vance Payne

“ In terms of the journey, the hard work we had to put in helped us not only to become friends but brothers. It was difficult, but at the end of the day we knew this was what we all wanted.” -Isaiah Martin



**ISAIAH  
MARTIN**

**HOW DID IT FEEL WHEN YOU REVEALED YOURSELVES AS THE NEW MEMBERS OF ALPHA PHI ALPHA?**

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**JORDAN LOGAN**

“ It was so surreal that my brothers and I were becoming a part of such a legendary organization and I was excited to uphold the legacy as the new faces of the Omicron Tau Chapter” -Jordan Logan

“ Knowing who you are is the greatest wisdom a human being can possess- Beyoncé”  
-Ahonsi Ohimai



**AHONSI OHIMAI**



**STEPHAUN MACK GADDIS**

“ I think I died in that accident because this must be heaven- Kanye West”  
-Stephaun Mack Gaddis

## AS A PROPHYTE. HOW DID IT FEEL TO SEE THE NEOPHYTES REVEALED?

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“Being the dean of the Fall 2016 line was an honor. These gentlemen worked very hard and earned their way to Alpha. I am proud of them, to call them my Neos, to call them my brothers” -Adrian Jones



“Bringing in the Fall 16 Neophytes was an experience that will always be a meaningful one to me. As a graduate student leaving CSU soon, I am very confident that the Omicron Tau Chapter is in good hands going forward.”-Donovan Tate



## AS A PROPHYTE. HOW DID IT FEEL TO SEE THE NEOPHYTES REVEALED?

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“Knowing what each of them was bringing to the table I was very excited to see their contribution to the organization. I picture them improving things in ways we (Fall ‘15) wouldn’t even think of. I was also proud of how far they had come and how close they had grown to one another. They, without a doubt, personify the meaning of brotherhood. From the little brother that catches all the slack, to the big brother that is a tad bit of a bad influence, each one had their place and it’s crazy how whatever place that was, it blended so well together with the whole.” –Ona KolaKehinde





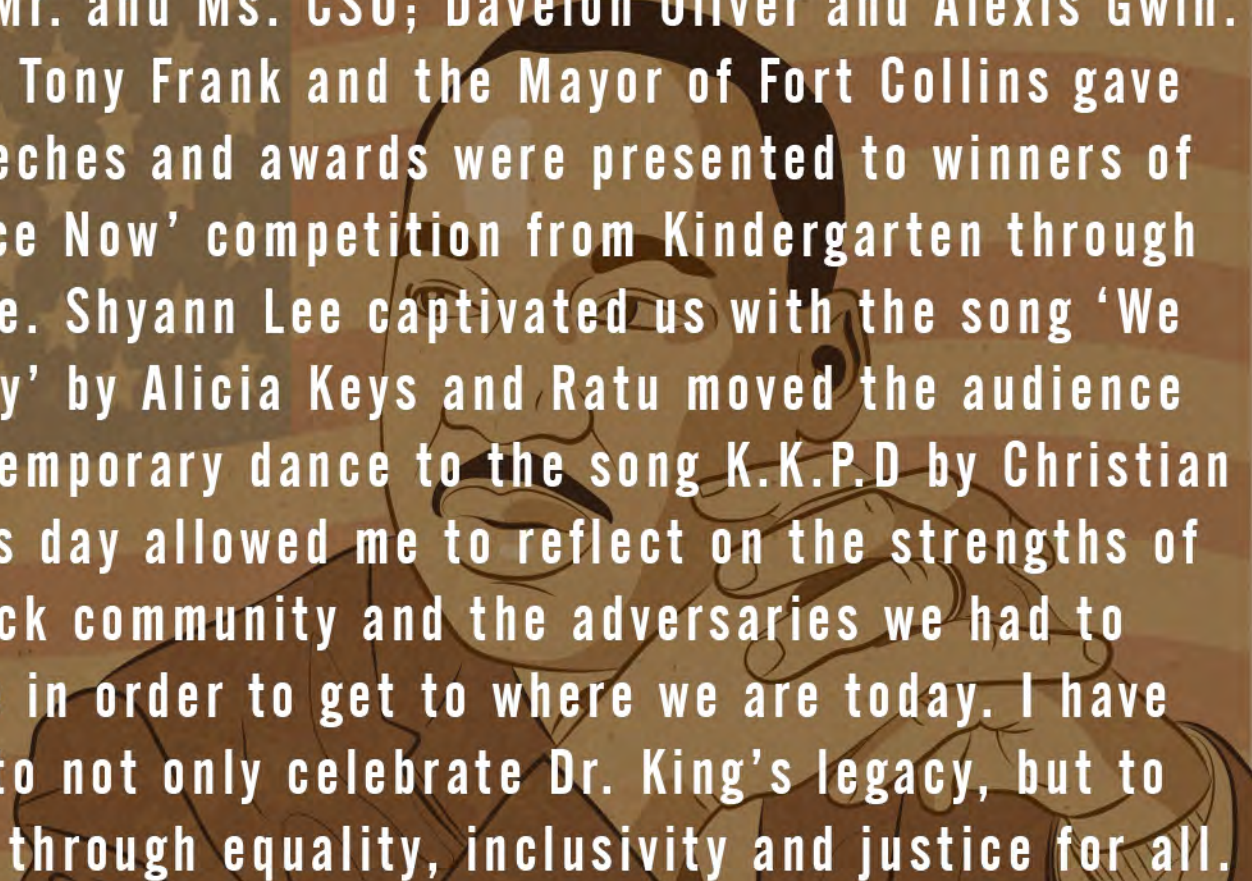
WRITTEN BY: YASMINE AMON

On Tuesday during "Dead Week", the B/AACC office invited dogs to help students de-stress. The event occurred throughout the Lory Student Center with finals week in mind and groups of students paraded through the LSC to play with the dogs. Our office got a visit from the fluffy, adorable dog named Winston who was rescued from the streets of Los Angeles. When I asked her about why she got the dog she said she thinks everyone who wants a dog should adopt them from shelters because so many abandoned dogs need a good home. Winston was very excited to be in our office and interacted with many students by showing us some tricks. This program was a great idea and had a successful turn out! Thank you to Jordan Logan, Ahonsi Ohimai and Ivan Hubbard for putting on this event.



# Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Community members and students of Colorado State gathered in Old Town Square to commemorate the legacy of Martin Luther King. Dr. Ray Black, Professor in Ethnic Studies of CSU gave the charge among other constituents, who said, "we must not only celebrate Dr. King's legacy but we must choose to continue it". Hundreds of people came out to march from, Old Town Square to the Lory Student Center (LSC) where the celebration began. The celebration was led by Mr. and Ms. CSU; Daveion Oliver and Alexis Gwin. President Tony Frank and the Mayor of Fort Collins gave short speeches and awards were presented to winners of the 'Justice Now' competition from Kindergarten through 12th grade. Shyann Lee captivated us with the song 'We Gotta Pray' by Alicia Keys and Ratu moved the audience with a contemporary dance to the song K.K.P.D by Christian Scott. This day allowed me to reflect on the strengths of the black community and the adversaries we had to overcome in order to get to where we are today. I have chosen, to not only celebrate Dr. King's legacy, but to continue it through equality, inclusivity and justice for all.





# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: MICHELLE MENDOZA

WRITTEN BY: YASMINE AMON

Michelle Mendoza shocked the audience with her poem, The Pledge. I had the privilege to interview her and learn more about the strong woman she has become.

## HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU WON THE SPOKEN WORD CONTEST?

"I was very surprised! I was also super nervous before it even started, and I was thinking about dropping out at the last minute. Before performing, I get really quite and try to work on my breathing and try not to think about it. It helped that Kent was playing music because music always calms me down."

## **DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN OTHER PERFORMING ARTS?**

"I used to be in my church choir when I was younger but I got out of it at a young age because I became involved in so many things. I've ghost-written for people that do music but I'm more focused on playing the violin. I also want to learn how to play steel pans which is an instrument made out of oil drums and the different density creates different sounds. They're very popular around Carnival time in Trinidad, which is where I'm from. I use to dance between the ages of 17 -19 years old; my friends and I were a part of a dance team and Monster Energy Drink sponsored us. When I lived in New York, a member of the New York Pops trained me, which is a distinguished group of musicians. I played with the Brooklyn Orchestra as a violinist where I had the opportunity to play Carnegie Hall and other large venues. I played in the orchestra from 5th grade, all through high school and a little after."

## **HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF AT CSU?**

"I am currently a sophomore at CSU, but I will be a junior in the Spring Semester. I started college back in New York at St. Johns University. I initially went because my cousin Kathy, who was almost like a big sister to me, was a student there. I was all set to go to college in the fall of 2010 and Kathy had her baby in July. There were some complications after the pregnancy and she passed away six days later. It was very hard to deal with because all of a sudden, she was gone and looking back, I know I should have taken time to mourn and grieve her passing. I still went ahead and attended St. Johns in August but I did very poorly my freshman year. I lost my scholarship because of my grades so I left college and started working."

## HOW DID YOU FIND YOURSELF AT CSU?

I worked for a fragrance company and at age 19, I was promoted to an Office Manager; the youngest the company had. When my mother found out that I was no longer attending college, I had to leave home. Thankfully, I had some amazing friends who allowed me to stay with them but before that I was homeless for a month and slept in parks or wherever I could. I would definitely say I'm stronger for it. My mom and I have been working on our relationship and I may not always like her but I will always love her. She is the only mother I have, for better or worse. I went to a community college in New York and graduated with an Associate's Degree in Biology before I came to Colorado. I chose CSU because of their veterinary program which is number three in the country for Animal Science."

## WHAT WAS IT LIKE LIVING IN TRINIDAD?

"I was born in Brooklyn and was sent to Trinidad once I started school. Trinidad has a large population of Spanish speakers, since we are off the coast of Venezuela. We also have a lot of Indians living there. It's a very diverse country. I love Carnival time in Trinidad. The different Caribbean islands have different types of Carnival. It's great being Caribbean and living in the West Indies because the Islands are so close together so you can bounce around to different islands whenever. The younger adults take weekend trips to the Bahamas, Barbados or Antigua since everything is 40 minutes to an hour away by plane. What I miss the most is the food because it's hard to find certain ingredients in Fort Collins. I also miss the music and of course I miss my family, especially my grandparents."

## **HOW WAS IT TRANSITIONING TO NEW YORK AFTER LIVING**

"It wasn't hard because I lived in Brooklyn and it was very diverse; the Caribbean population is very prominent there. I met my best friend in New York and until this day, we are still very close."

## **YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU SPEAK SPANISH; DO YOU SPEAK ANY OTHER LANGUAGES?**

"I tell people I speak fluent Dominican which is Spanish but with island-slang added to it. I've always loved languages so I took Russian for a year and I loved it and I would like to get back into it. I dabbled in Italian, since I know Spanish; I thought it would be easier to learn. I've always been interested in Portuguese but it's difficult to learn because it reads like Spanish but sounds like French and I have zero French experience!"


## **HAS YOUR CULTURAL BACKGROUND INFLUENCE YOUR POETRY?**

"It has, because I believe you write what you know. My experiences have been a little different from other black Americans or African Americans based on the fact that I identify as multicultural even though both of my parents were born in Trinidad. It has influenced how I see the world and the way other people interact with me. It has made me question myself, not knowing where I fit in and wondering if I'm black enough to fit in with this group or I'm not light enough to be Hispanic. It wears on you sometimes so writing was a good outlet for that."

Black History Month 2017

# EMBRACE MY BLACKNESS

## FEBRUARY 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>JANUARY 26TH (THURSDAY)</b> Thirst for Knowledge Back to Africa: More than Slavery 4PM - LSC 300	<b>JANUARY 28TH (SATURDAY)</b> Clash of the Titans 6PM - LSC Theater	<b>JANUARY 31ST</b> Real Talk: Rape Survivors in the Black Community 4PM - B/AACC	<b>1</b> Black History Month Kickoff 4PM - LSC Ballroom C	<b>2</b> Being Black & Religious 4PM - LSC 300 --- Movie: Birth of a Nation 6PM - LSC Theater	<b>3</b> Documentary: 13th 2PM - B/AACC	<b>4</b> Meet the Greeks 4PM - Cherokee Park Ballroom
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Real Talk: What is Blackness? 4PM - B/AACC --- Speaker: Ibram X. Kendi 6PM - Grey Rock Rm	<b>8</b> Black Faculty, Staff, & Student Luncheon 12PM - Grey Rock Rm <i>(BY INVITE ONLY)</i>	<b>9</b> Being Black & Bi/Multi-Racial 4PM - LSC 300	<b>10</b> Comedian: Nate Jackson 7PM - LSC North Ballroom	<b>11</b> 22nd Annual Hip Hop Explosion: "Back by Popular Demand!" 6PM - Lincoln Center --- After Party 9PM - Event Center
<b>12</b> Dripping Melanin Hair Show 4PM - LSC Theater	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Real Talk: Black Love 4PM - B/AACC --- Spoken Word Artist: Rudy Francisco 6PM - LSC North Ballroom	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Soul Food Lunch Aspen Grille <i>(NOMINAL FEE)</i> <i>(RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)</i> 970-491-7006 --- Being Black & LGB 4PM - LSC 300 --- Movie: Southside with You 4:30 & 7PM LSC Theater	<b>17</b> Soul Food Lunch Aspen Grille <i>(NOMINAL FEE)</i> <i>(RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)</i> 970-491-7006	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Real Talk: Cultural Appropriation 4PM - B/AACC	<b>22</b> Sex for Chocolate 5PM - LSC 382	<b>23</b> Being Black & a Feminist 4PM - LSC 300 --- Speaker: TBA 6PM - LSC Grand Ballroom	<b>24</b> Quiz Bowl 12PM - B/AACC --- Old School Funk Night 7PM - LSC Ballroom A	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Real Talk: G.O.A.T. Black Heroes 4PM - B/AACC	For details, please go to <a href="http://baacc.colostate.edu">baacc.colostate.edu</a> or use the QR code.	<b>MARCH 2ND</b> Speaker: Stephanie Covington Armstrong "Not All Black Girls Know How to Eat: A Story of Bulimia" 6PM Longs Peak Rm		<b>MARCH 4TH</b> Black Student Empowerment Summit <i>(REGISTRATION REQUIRED)</i> --- All Black Party 9PM - Event Center