

**Bryan McNeal**

Age: 16, Grade: 11

School Name: Huntsville High School, Huntsville, AL

Educator: Amy Bishop

Category: Poetry

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**ASSOTTO; SAPPHIRE; LANGSTON; HANSBERRY; AUDRE**

ASSOTTO

Speak.  
Black boy be  
loud.  
Black boy be  
you.

Queer.  
Love like a god,  
sing like an angel,  
kiss like heaven.  
Let you live.

Rain.  
Down from the sky,  
from the ancestors.  
Magic yourself a new  
and handsome reality.

Crown.  
Wear it proudly,  
poised atop your locks.  
No cracks, no tilting.  
Be your regality.

Love.  
They cannot take it  
away from you. No  
matter how hard they  
may try.

You.  
Live and love you.  
Every aspect, every facet.  
Let that black boy joy  
shine on.

HEMPHILL

Black and white  
images capturing  
the ministry of  
blackness  
unbridled.

Of queer and black  
souls wafting together  
around the trees of life,  
around the seas of air.

Hands on our backs,  
heads on our shoulders,  
lips on our cheeks,  
bodies on our skin.

This is what it's like  
to be here.  
This is what it's like  
to be queer.

You can't wish us away.  
Because we could never  
close our eyes to ourselves.  
Because we could never  
deny ourselves.

Our steps are not dictated  
by any human being.  
Our love is not invalidated  
by anyone's words.

We lie together beneath  
the blanket of the moon,  
beneath the canopy of  
the stars.

In this land,  
we're eternal.

## HANSBERRY

This weight  
grows heavy.  
The effort  
in trying to  
maintain  
a broken and  
crumbling  
facade.

And I don't  
know if I'm  
ready. I don't

know if I'm  
ready to step  
out onto the  
stage, front  
and center,  
with the lights  
bearing down  
on me.

I am afraid that  
I'll make the wrong  
move. Afraid that  
I will get more than  
just a cacophony of  
boos. My body is  
fragile and I don't  
know how much it  
can take.

So I take my thoughts  
backstage. In the  
dark, I can dance with  
no one watching.  
I don't have to worry  
about prying eyes  
analysing my every  
mistep, building a  
plot against me.

Maybe I'm just  
overthinking.  
Maybe I'm allowing  
too much of what  
people think influence  
the acts of my life.  
I wonder what would  
happen if I stepped onto  
the stage and let myself  
fall into his arms.

LANGSTON

I promised myself  
that I would  
let go.

This isn't something  
that I ever  
wanted.

This isn't something  
that I ever  
wanted.

But there was no lying  
to myself about  
who I was.

In love with the way  
he smiled as he  
talked to me.

In love with the way  
he glowed when  
in the sun.

In love with the way  
he moved, like  
a beautiful spirit.

In love with everything  
about him,  
I was.

And maybe that's when  
I realized that I  
was in denial.

There was no way I could  
let go of the light  
he brought.

Even if he found it so easy  
to let go of me  
and leave me

with ghosts of a familiar face.  
With the cold remains  
of a homey fire.

I promised myself  
that I would  
let go.

And maybe I was wrong  
for even wanting to.  
Hate cannot replace  
love.

## SAPPHIRE

Window crackin',  
open to my pain.  
Let you see this  
roiling sea of a  
black body in  
turmoil.

Tunnel vision  
focused on all the  
problems of the  
ghetto but you  
can't focus on the  
light and love that  
is born there.

In the kisses of mamas.  
In the talks of papas.  
In the sways and bops  
and on the courts  
and in the fields and  
in grandma's cooking  
and in all that make  
us black.

Back crackin',  
may be breakin' from  
the weight of your  
words.  
But always comin'  
back up from the  
ashes and the dust.