



# THE PHOENIX OF PHILLIPS

Literary works and photography from the Phillips neighborhood

Volume IV • Winter 2018

Free in Phillips, \$1 suggested donation



Photo credit: Except where noted, photographs in this issue were taken by our two wonderful senior youth photographers: Belem and Talia



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Volume IV

Winter 2018

The Phoenix of Phillips  
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*The Phillips area is comprised of four  
neighborhoods: Ventura Village, Phillips West,  
Midtown Phillips and East Phillips.  
The boundaries of the Phillips community are  
Interstate 94 to the north, Hiawatha Avenue to  
the east, Lake Street to the south,  
and Interstate 35W to the west.*

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The Young Leaders Program of the Semilla Center builds job and leadership skills in youth ages 11-16. Youth can apply to the summer 2018 intensive program by submitting their resume to [semillacenter@gmail.com](mailto:semillacenter@gmail.com).

# CONTRIBUTORS

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These youth were involved in the Young Dance/Semilla collaboration: Talia, Roo, Eva, Kimberly, Esmeralda, Nathalie, Destiny, Noah, Molly, Tavin, Sammie, Ella

In the interest of safety, no identifying information is provided for our youth writers. Their poems were written during a Semilla Center writing workshop for youth taught by Marion Gomez. They're all great!

Except where noted, photographs in this issue were taken by our two wonderful senior youth photographers: Belem and Talia.

## THE PHOENIX OF PHILLIPS VOLUME V

The next issue of The Phoenix will be out in July of 2018, with the theme of: "Resistance and Resilience." Submit by May 15 to [semillacenter@gmail.com](mailto:semillacenter@gmail.com) or by mail to: 2742 15th Ave S. Minneapolis, MN 55407

## EDITOR'S NOTE: HEALING

2017 was a difficult year for our community and our world. The opioid crisis, the chopping away at progressive ideas and civil liberties, wars and hurricanes and earthquakes and terrible wildfires. Our planet needs healing. Our nation needs healing. We need healing.

The poems and essays in this edition of The Phoenix of Phillips represent our longing for healing. Three Somali men tell their stories of war, hardship and immigration. Young people imagine a different kind of world. Immigrants from Mexico tell of their joys and struggles. And the photographs taken by our youth show a neighborhood and a world in which nature, art and building a strong community brings healing.

The legend of the Phoenix is that it rises from the ashes, a new life. May that be so for our nation, our world, our community, our bodies and our spirits in 2018!

## NOTA DEL EDITOR: SANIDAD

2017 fue un año difícil para nuestra comunidad y para el mundo. La crisis del uso de opio, el rechazo de ideas progresistas y libertades civiles, guerras y huracanes, terremotos y incendios devastadores. Nuestro planeta necesita sanidad. Nosotros necesitamos sanidad.

Los poemas y ensayos en esta edición de "The Phoenix of Phillips" representan nuestra búsqueda de sanidad. Tres hombres de Somalia cuentan sus historias de guerra, sus mis-fortunas e inmigración. Inmigrantes de México cuentan acerca de sus alegrías y luchas. Y fotografías tomadas por nuestros jóvenes muestran un vecindario y un mundo en el cual naturaleza, arte y creación de una comunidad fuerte generan sanidad.

Según la leyenda el Fenix se levanta de las cenizas a una nueva vida. ¡Que eso suceda a nuestras naciones, nuestro mundo, nuestra comunidad, nuestros cuerpos y nuestros espíritus en 2018!

## I HEAL

To a wall that I helped to create, time brought me to a metamorphosis. A spiritual awakening spoke to me from this great wall. It "is" mesmerizing and speaks to you if you choose to listen. As I stood in front of this wall in total peace and serenity, I could feel the "Power" well up inside of me slowly. Inside my body starting with my stomach, and spreading out like rays of light. I knew my time had come. The calling of the light within to shine ever so brightly once again. Evolving from gliding, slithering, and crawling on my belly to free and complete flight. I was able to envision myself in the various stages of my metamorphosis.

I left behind total disaster, chaos, the skin of my being, and a heartless, barely beating shell of a human, who represented humankind. On the negative end of living. I left behind a world where I never belonged and I knew it but could not get through it. Like a grand maze it was.

The shedding of my former self was almost apparent, going into a hospital, to a nursing home, to assisted living; back to independence. I left the stigma of the old me to the taboo's labels, and being confused. I left the no way out, no life behind dead imagination/hallucination. My number one fear..... "losing my mind".

My existence hurts, it hurts for everyone who has ever been called, referred to, or labeled as "crazy". I hurt for all of the people who have lost their way, been dropped in a hole, locked away, killed or totally and completely ignored. "Crazy" what is that?, can someone explain it to me so that I may understand where I disappeared to when a family member called me "crazy". I was hurting long before I was called "crazy", and I knew something was wrong as my life slowly began to change.

I told two of my doctors that I was having hallucinations and they both responded: "Let's just watch it and see how it goes." My primary doctor and my sleep disorder doctor said this to me. As time went on my visiting nurse saw and mentioned the changes, but I was already gone. I told her she was mistaken because I was fine. I deteriorated into a psychotic break that was medically induced. The treatment I received gave me great pain and anger, enough to want to stand up for the mentally ill, or mentally unhealthy to bring them out of the darkness into the light. I am healing!

**Elisabeth Henderson**

SONNET:  
EVERY POSSIBLE HISTORY

*"According to Feynman, a system has not just one history, but every possible history."*

—Stephen Hawking

What comfort to those like myself who walk through space and time with the unsteady gait of one lost in a house of mirrors, to abandon futile attempts to stalk angels of certainty. Inordinate

possibilities set our lives to blaze like the history of the cosmos. Freed from the onus of one future, one past, we are graced with a steadfast present. Days fading in memory, days still to come

cannot be named or numbered. Infinite stories with infinite endings emit light like the spiraling galaxies. We shine with what was, we flash out what will be.

**John Richard**

## AUTUMN SEQUENCE

all night  
the gate with the  
broken latch kept time for  
rustling leaves - wordless chants to soothe  
the ghosts.

The cardinal flowers around the rain garden  
bend low in the September wind,  
reaching down to the wet place  
where humility begets humus.

sudden  
warm snap - asters  
begin to fade early,  
their brown blossoms match the daisies killed  
by frost

irate  
crows caw louder  
each morning now, cross at  
the chill, scolding Joe for being  
a dog.

**John Richard**

## PICKLING THE BEETS

Orbs of red  
red  
goodness, I slice you  
and yet  
it is my hands  
that gleam  
crimson

blushing in your  
sweet stigmata.

Each of you  
so heavy today  
in my hand  
began  
just months ago  
as a seed  
too small  
to sow separately.

You were the lucky ones,  
you know, when  
two weeks after warm soil  
and water  
woke you  
to face the spring sky

I, yes I,  
the wielder of the kitchen knife,  
left you to grow  
after decimating  
your siblings.

I chose you to  
live  
though the warm summer  
to drink  
dark water  
and to stretch  
your greens  
towards the giving  
sun.

And to what end?

Boiled and peeled,  
you wait  
in forced  
patience  
for the slicing knife

wait to go into  
hot clean jars  
to be covered in  
salt  
sugar and vinegar.

If some of you  
receive more mustard seed  
than others  
to garnish  
your glassy winter homes,

it is not a sign  
of your merit.

Tastes differ in this house.

But try to believe now  
you will return to  
the earth  
joined in a new way  
to the stuff of your sower  
and your reaper.

**John Richard**

## I AM MY AMERICA'S DREAM

I have a confession to make:

"No man can deactivate my dream to self-motivate."

I am America's Dream:

A bulletproof, bully-proof, life for all our children.

I am the dreams of my Heroes:

Booker T., W.E.B. DuBois, Frederick D.,  
and the Junior Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King,  
Edward Nahman Tilsen,  
Gordon Parks and August Wilson.

And my She roes:

Kimberly Nightingale  
Patricia Kirkpatrick, Patricia Hampl,  
Patricia McKissack, Patricia Smith  
and Patricia Sample.

I inspire beauty for our community's unity.

I'll take all that I am and make more than I need,

Tracy McMillan did it, why not me.

I yearn to learn to mentor to serve.

My forgiving sorrows channel children into techy tomorrows.

First steps: Graduation.

Eager readers become America's leaders.

Make mistakes.

It is never too late to re-read the greats,

With whatever energy it takes.

Do more than pass.

I'll re-read my way to the top of my class.

Work some, play some, create some, praise some,

laugh some, chill-ax some every day.

I am America's dream.

**Patricia Anita Young**

**Ebenezer Park Writing Memories Group**

## \*RAIN IN LENT

Now the land softens in the melting snow,  
waking again to the touch of fresh water.  
The first green shoots begin to show.  
Now the land softens in the melting snow.  
Icy tears thaw and over dry hearts flow  
readying dry lives for new seed, new spore,  
like the land that softens in the melting snow,  
waking again to the touch of fresh water.

**John Richard**

## DO IT WRITE NOW...

As a writer, I am permanently passionate  
and temporarily temper mental  
During my last crisis, I booked a session with my  
psychotherapist.  
Everything was WRONG.  
Why must everyone else have such an attitude?  
For twenty minutes, my Physician listened attentively,  
As I gnashed the planet earth alphabetically.  
Somewhere in there, the learned Counselor offered  
this advice:  
You, my client are a serial writer, cruising down  
writer's block. DETOUR!  
When you are writing, the world enjoys a universal  
peace,  
When you STOP writing , all truces cease.  
With that, she motioned me off her couch, and  
behind her desk into her warm upholstered seat.  
She handed me her legal pad and pen and then  
scribbled WRITE  
NOW! Refills Lifetime, on her prescription pad which  
she handed to me.  
Then she laid down on her "patient" couch  
and snapped her fingers into  
a self-induced hypnotic sleep.

**Patricia Anita Young**  
**Ebenezer Park Writing Memories Group**

## ASKING

Linden heart leaf hanging  
from the tree by a spider's web,  
visible, then invisible,  
a glint in the sun.  
That is how it feels,  
to ask for love sometimes.

**Pat Willis Vincent**

## AWAKE 'N REM FOUR

I was the dried-up raisin in Langston's  
DREAM DEFERRED.  
Physicians feared that I would not wake up.  
Bloated resentments festered.  
"Give me a reason to wake up?" During the night  
thoughts of what others had done to me disappeared  
miraculously.  
Images of how I had harmed loved ones raced  
one after another.  
Stop it. Make it stop. It hurts too bad. I never  
intended to hurt anyone. I did everything out of love.  
"So did your loved ones."  
The Voice of a magnificent light.  
Forgive. Be Forgiven, Release."  
Deprived of oxygen, rage cannot breathe.  
Come soar to the stars.  
Dusk to dawn shifted from blame and shame to  
my present : Love gushing through my arteries.  
I arose to a vision to serve my joy.  
Forgiveness is delicious. Yummy!

**Patricia Anita Young**  
**Ebenezer Park Writing Memories Group**

## DEAR DOCTOR

I have this surreal dream,  
Each and every night it seems,  
I awake each morning to its memory, yet  
My nocturnal dream does not go away.  
I daydream throughout my day.  
It is the present from my past.  
I try to make it go away but still it  
Lasts and lasts and lasts and,  
I dream I am...  
I dream I CAN!  
Am I a frustrated creative?  
Can't you prescribe some sort of pill?  
Just PRN?  
I must be ill?  
Or prep me for  
"night" Surgery?  
My Physician ceased writing to gaze into my eyes.  
A woman of few but learn-ed words...  
And simply said...  
You are your dream.

**Patricia Anita Young**  
**Ebenezer Park Writing Memories Group**

## SENSIBLE SHOES

She had on sensible shoes—  
not those spiky things  
that shout out power.  
If the need to run arose,  
she'd fly untouched  
toward freedom,  
always singing.

**Pat Willis Vincent**

## DAMSELFLY

Watch the beaded damselfly,  
Statuesque on a blade of green.  
Crickets sound with the setting sun.  
How tenuous the sight is –  
Blink and its gone.

**Pat Willis Vincent**

## ECLIPSE

Two orbs in the sky  
collide in our view  
for an instant,  
we have darkness  
not asked for,  
a sunset in the middle  
of a work day.  
Should we still  
Hunt and gather?  
Point guns at each other?  
Remain stuck in traffic –  
or be glad  
the sun rose on cue, with  
no living being  
controlling the switch.

**Pat Willis Vincent**

## SEMILLAS

Un frijol rinde  
125 frijoles  
en la cosecha.  
Somos semilla—  
fragmentos enterrados  
en el suelo  
cubiertos de abono,  
descansando.

Nos baña el sol  
Nos cae la lluvia.  
Junto al río,  
florece con  
la fuerza vital creativa  
del Hacedor.  
Renacemos  
y somos millones.

**Sarah Degner Riveros**

## SEEDS

One bean  
Yields 125 beans  
In the harvest.  
We are seeds—  
Buried fragments  
In the soil  
Covered with compost,  
Resting.  
We bathe in the sun.  
Rain falls on us.  
Beside the river  
We flourish with  
The vital creative force  
Of the Creator.  
We are reborn,  
And we are millions.

**Sarah Degner Riveros**

## 3 WORDS FOR 4 PEOPLE

4 brown-eyed Souls  
    Circled tight on the clean smooth blacktop  
See you again? They begin  
Yes- they nod- See you again

Cool morning air bracing emotions over-flowing  
    Blue sky, wet leaves, bus boarding

4 small dark heads now bowed in a circle  
    Throats constricting, hearts beating, people boarding  
See you again- they affirm  
Yes-strength gathering, eyes blinking- see you again

3 small words for 4 brown eyed friends

**Christine Leehey**

## TOO BROKEN

There are vivid memories of joy that we will cherish for a lifetime

Receiving two small photographs of two small boys  
Arriving at a rural - town foster home and meeting our children for the first time.

Tucking them in on Friday evenings and planning our future together

Sharing the joy of Adoption Day by riding the crazy bike at The Falls, and eating at the Pope's Table

But today, these 14 years feel like they didn't happen-

It has been many years since we have felt joy together as a family.

Our children are too broken to love us back-

**Christine Leehey**

They speak about it sometimes in sermons and songs;  
Also in parades with big brass bands, the idea is there;  
When a lone crow flies and his absence unaware,  
It may be for this same place he does long.

From whence we come, then we shall return  
Rack up the bottles and count them, enter the tally;  
Not that it matters, henceforth as one ascends  
weightless from the valley;

With our forebears we shall mingle, nothing more to discern.

And why should we seek this garden of eternal mindfulness?

To no more feel the sting of dreams gone to shit?  
Because we've tried, unsuccessfully, of trying to get over it;

A butterfly dreams of shedding its wings crawling  
back into the chrysalis.

**John Gwinn**

A TREE GROWS AND GROWS AND GROWS IN PHILLIPS

There she stood wounded and sore, as the city workers were scooping her many amputated limbs into a big truck to be hauled away and turned into wood chips. I was feeling a little guilty, looking upon her nakedness ---- sheared clean, except for her huge canopy at the very top. "My, you're a tall tree," I told her. I had no idea she was so tall. Her height was obscured by all the coverage she was giving us below. She literally umbrella-ed our front yard. Her

branches were sweeping across our porch roof. At one point during the final summer of her invasiveness I had to duck in order to avoid a low-hanging branch while cutting the grass.

So yes, it was me who called the city every week for two summers straight about this big bully of a tree growing out of control on our boulevard. I got really good at it too. At first I called the general number and spoke with the gate keeper. I was told every time that my message would be passed on to the Parks and Recreation supervisor. After weeks of that, I finally asked for the supervisor's number. The gate keeper was hesitant to give it out, but I persisted, giving her the choice between calling her every day, or calling the Parks and Rec. supervisor. After speaking on the phone with him several times and being assured each time they would get to it as soon as they could, the summer was over.

The following summer I found out the cell phone number of the Director of Parks and Recreation. I called him and gave him an ear full. I pulled out the big guns and played the "Phillips card." "You don't see low-hanging branches in the West Minneapolis neighborhoods," Phillips Neighborhood is always the last to get services." Every-so-often that kind of complaint works.

One of my Haitian neighbors suggested that we should just get a chainsaw and cut down the branches ourselves. "No way," I said, "this is why we pay taxes." That's the difference between our spoiled, rich-nation thinking and the thinking of those who couldn't rely on government and had to do for themselves.

One morning I answered a knock at my door to a Park and Rec. worker. He told me they heard me "loud and clear," and went on to say that for the past couple of summers they had been cutting down Ash trees and planting others in their place, due to the epidemic of Emerald Ash Borers. "So," he said, "please don't call our boss again. We will get to your boulevard tree as soon as we can. I promise."

The following spring they finally came. They not only trimmed my tree, but all the trees on the street in the same condition. However, they took it out on my tree, cutting off limb after limb to the very high top, leaving only a thin canopy of branches and leaves. Poor thing. My guilt was complete, a guilt that did not lift for a year.

There she stood the following summer; tall, majestic, and healed, her once-fresh cuts as brown as the rest of her trunk. And all the front yard flowers were blooming again for the first time in three years, basking in the newly-found sun.

**Donna Pususta Neste**

## MOURNING IN AMERICA

B will ride the bus to school today, backpack on her lap, ear buds humming with Daddy Yankee and Luis Fonsi. She will explore particle theory, themes of loss and duty in Shakespeare and Garcia Marquez, the effects of wage and price controls in post war America. At lunch, she will laugh at stupid jokes, check Snap Chat and Face Book, text a friend from her summer course at a well known college. After the final bell, she will ride the bus home, have a snack, walk to her little brother's bus stop, watch You Tubers, start on homework, wait for her parents and dinner, more homework, her favorite TV show on Netflix, bed.

Somewhere in there—though Google and Amazon and Apple decry it, oppose it, the President of these United States will act on her fate, though he does not know her, or know any path to gain that knowledge. Whatever he says, it will be about greatness, but B and the 800,000 will know it is about the hunt. After she brushes her teeth and slips into bed, perhaps she will hum the song as she hugs her pillow, her college, her life: Despacito. Despacito.

**Patrick Cabello Hansel**

*(This poem was part of the Anguish and Hope Arts Show at the Vine Arts Center, February, 2018 and Tupelo Press 30 in 30 in September, 2017)*



## WALKING TALL

Three to four years ago, I was helping kids learn to stilt at Little Earth. My partner was also there helping kids learn to stilt. A girl kept asking me questions about my partner and asking my partner questions, "Why do you talk that way?" "Why do you act like that?" "Why do you talk like a girl?" Finally she asked if I was gay. I said that I was here to teach stilt and the question was irrelevant and not appropriate. She said, "You're gay, aren't you? Are you gay?" I avoided the questions and kept trying to just get her to focus on stilt, holding both her hands, looking her in the eye, giving positive encouraging messages about her stilt. But it was difficult because she kept on with contempt in her voice. Finally she got to a tree and stopped to rest and said, "I know you're gay. Don't touch me. You're gross. That's gross. Is he your boyfriend? That's sick." And that was the end of our lesson, except I helped her down with her trying to not touch me. I didn't see her in our programming for a couple of years and then about a year ago I noticed she was intermittently coming to our classes and started interacting with me again. I took it slow and just said I was happy to see her again, and tried to create a new normal.

I haven't seen this young person in several months but today I got a call on my lunch break about "four girls from Little Earth were at the puppet theatre and wanted to talk to me." So I came right away. I found the four teenagers and recognized one was this person was whom I tried to teach to stilt years ago. They said they were in the area and wanted to drop by to "say hi." I knew there was more to the story but I led them on a tour of the theatre. I found that they had been at the DACA protest and walked half-way across South Minneapolis, in below freezing weather with only hoodies on. They were cold, and I teased out of them that this was part of the reason they stopped, and they were tired of walking. I thought ok, good, at least they felt safe enough to find a warm place they trust, people they might trust. The young person I had tried to teach stilt was extremely polite, asked questions, smiled, and seemed very much at ease. They asked where I worked and I said, "All over here, but I have an office. Do you want to see it?" They said, "Yes." I took them to my office where my friend and co-worker also welcomed them and offered them a snack. They started opening up more about the day and their situation, very slowly. They admitted they were also biding time to arrive

home at a regular time to not draw attention to the fact they had left school activities. I asked them questions about it, but stayed out of lecture mode, kept in keep-safe mode. Then I found out they had left school before lunch and had not eaten all day. So I said, "Do you like tamales?" They didn't know what they were and I described them. They said that sounded good. So we went across the street to the Mercado and I got some tamales for us. On the way, they asked why I was being so nice to them. I said that we were neighbors and I want people to be warm, safe and not hungry. After we sat down with our tamales, the walls came down. We all talked and got to know each other more. The girl from stilt, who now went by a more gender-neutral name, said, "Do you remember when you told me you were gay?" I said, "Yes and no. I didn't tell you I was gay but I am." She said, "Well you did, but none of us identify as straight, either." I said that I wondered that because their names seemed to be more gender neutral. They asked me if I was out and I said "Oh, yes, a long time ago, I came out, in college." They wanted to know what my coming out process was like so I told them a bit about it. I asked if they were involved in activities at school outside class and the stilt student spoke up to say, "I'm really involved in the G.S.A. Do you know what that is?" I said "Yes, the Gay Straight Alliance." She smiled. They asked how much the food cost and if they should pay me back. I said, "Nope, my treat, this time." After the tamales, I made sure they had a plan to all get home and means to do so, then I left them as they seemed warmer, happier and very ready to carry on their excursion/truancy/journey. I invited them to our Annual Big Puppet Party next week with Phillips youth and said there would be free pizza and then left. I was so happy that they stopped at the puppet theatre. The work worked. That's all.

My/our lessons were: Be who you are with young people. Come out if you are GLBTQ, in the right time and place. Give refuge to young people, if only for a minute. Don't judge but make sure young people are safe in their choices. Keep giving if homophobia attacks because it attacks out of fear. Love and care eventually break that down. Homophobia amongst our young people in this neighborhood is rampant. Talk about it. Stop it. Care about them. Keep coming back. Give space but stay around and stay open. Make sure they are safe, fed, warm, and listen deeply. Keep inviting. Get them winter coats.

**Bart Buch**

## HEALERS BECOME THE HEALED AT THE PHILLIPS NEIGHBORHOOD CLINIC

As I look back over the last 10 years of my involvement with the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic and reflect on our role as healers many things come to mind. I think of the health services that we have provided. In the last 10 years we have provided care to nearly 8,000 patients. Each of these people come to us looking for our help. This does not always mean a healing of physical ailments; this can also mean a healing of mental, emotional, legal and family problems. Not always do we have a cure. Sometimes all we can offer is somebody to listen and offer support through the tough times. When I think of healing I also think of the community. In addition

to providing care in the clinic, the students who volunteer in the Clinic also volunteer nearly 2,000 hours per year in the community. They tutor children, run diabetes support groups, provide basic health care and education in homeless shelters and work at food shelves. Most of all, though, when I think of healing I think of a healing of the soul. Connecting with others on a deeper level to try to understand that the people who come in the doors of the Clinic are more than just patients is a start. Learning about what is important to them, about their path in life, and about their success and challenges is a way to connect on a deeper level. In this way the patient-healer role flips, and the PNC volunteers, including myself, become the healed.

**Brian Sick, MD**  
Medical Director, Phillips Neighborhood Clinic



Maybe someday, I'll go back to that place.  
 The place where I felt a different kind of fear.  
 The dark clouds rolled over us without warning.  
 The wind blew my hair into my face.  
 The only comforting thing being the paddle  
 that I held onto with all my strength,  
 as the waves started to rock our canoe  
 back and forth.

I couldn't hear what people were saying,  
 and the only words that stood out  
 were "safe" and "okay".

It was almost as if the wind  
 was telling me these things  
 as the rain fell and the canoe  
 rocked me like a newborn child.

**Belem**

## WHERE I AM AT TODAY

Comfort, green, cars, people, plants, houses, water,  
 toys, swimming, I liked school a lot, school work, ring  
 around the rosy. The breathing room, the invention of  
 Hugo Cabret, Wonderstruck, Alien poem. Brown black  
 hair, brown eyes, Chinese, smart, animal abuse, racism,  
 sexism, world, hunger, illness. Mom, dad, Abuelita, tios,  
 Abuelito, brothers, writing, reading, outside, meditation.

**Maria**

## OH, TO BE

To be a soccer ball, soaring into the goal.  
 To be comfy bed I lay one while watching You Tube.  
 To be the beautiful yellow roses in my living room.  
 To be the gold dangling necklace on T's neck.  
 To be the makeup box that makes an art piece  
 on my face.  
 To be my wardrobe, full of clothes.

**Talia**

I come from my mother with love.  
 I come from the brown and black girl  
 With sorrow, heartache and tears.  
 I come from school work,  
 Tired and ready to sleep.  
 I come from my brother's anger.  
 I come from meditation outside,  
 Calmer than before.  
 I come from reading,  
 Hyper and ready to play.

**Maria**

## I SEE A NEW WORLD COMING

You will see it too, because  
 It will be when you are finally happy again.  
 The grass will appear greener,  
 The snow whiter  
 And your skin brighter.  
 Your voice will be your own again.  
 No one else will control your sadness.  
 There are the things you will gain,  
 There is a new world coming.  
 When it does,  
 You'll feel it too.

**Belem**

## MERCY FEEDS JUSTICE

**Editor's note:** *this poem was written collaboratively by youth from the Semilla Center and Young Dance. In the spring, they learned—and taught—dance, poetry and mosaics. Their dance was intentionally born in a deep connection to Phillips: movements were created at places of hope: St. Paul's Church, the Greenway, Shalom Garden, but also where there was pain: under the bridge where homeless men sleep, at the site of a double homicide.*

*"Mercy" and "Justice" refer to two trees planted in the Peace Garden at St. Paul's: Mercy was damaged when the roof was repaired, but during the dance, it stood—wounded and graceful.*

It was split in two, still green and alive

Hands can't hold our souls  
 But can embrace the ocean in the sky

Bricks rained from the sky  
 Yet mercy survived

Justice is neither pen nor sword,  
 It should not/cannot leave mark of ink or blood

How can an invisible hand be stopped?  
 What armor can mercy wear?

Kind joyful happy free-free-free-free and beautiful

Sometimes you have to be justice  
 Offering a patch of shade  
 In a world full of overbearing heat

Can we be each other's shield?

When we refuse to back down...

Sometimes in the very end everyone is fighting for themselves  
But right now in this moment we are fighting for each other

Justice is love.

Not lightning nor rain but human error  
Sometimes the most devastating kindness  
Can be overruled by mistakes

Intention is not always the culprit  
Justice is invincible but  
Can be pierced by the smallest twig

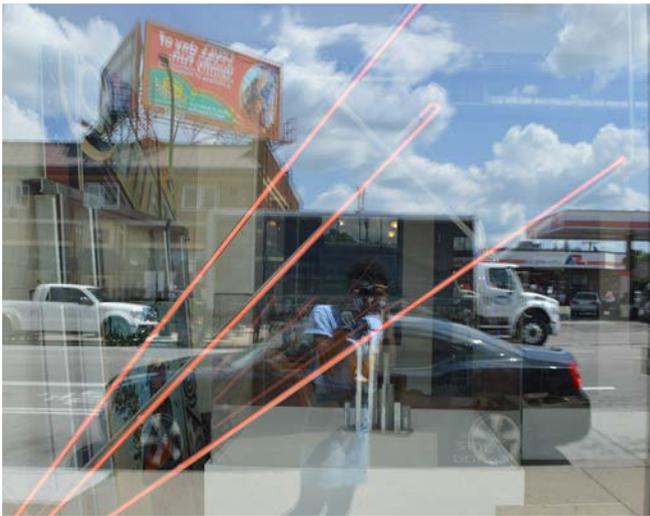
It was not the sky's fault

She got paralyzed and she split herself  
up to a new thing/Watch and enjoy her beauty

Stubborn  
Stubborn  
Stubborn  
Stubborn can be annoying  
amazing

...  
But you love it

It was a homecoming of sorts  
Wood on wood, nail on nail  
Maybe not the sweetest, nor the juiciest  
But the bravest you will ever taste



## UNA VIDA INOLVIDABLE

Mi infancia fue inolvidable en México.  
 Tuve los mejores amigos en mi niñez  
 Mis padres, los mejores que Dios me pudo dar  
 La vida, una Aventura, con mucha  
 Adrenalina, Tristezas y Alegrías  
 Conocí al amor de mi vida y me Enamoré  
 Luchamos juntos por nuestros sueños y –  
 Seguimos luchando por ellos  
 La vida en Estados Unidos no ha sido fácil  
 Pero con esfuerzo y perseverancia  
 Hemos logrado algunas de nuestras metas.  
 Hemos tenido muchas alegrías con nuestros dos  
 Retoños,  
 Mis hijos, el más grande Regalo que Dios me dio.  
 Muchos triunfos y también fracasos, pero muy  
 Contento con lo que he logrado  
 Trabajo en lo que me gusta  
 Y esto feliz con lo que tengo.

**Delfino Gomez Verónica**

## A LOS 15 AÑOS

Cuando tenía 15 años,  
 Mis padres intentaron traerme a los EEUU.  
 Intentamos tres veces,  
 Y los tres veces nos agarraron..  
 La primera vez fue una buena experiencia.  
 La segunda, tenía miedo,  
 Porque alguien aventó un busca pies de pólvora  
 Que cayó justo en mis pies.  
 La tercera, mis padres hablaron de los cholos,  
 Que asaltaban a su propia gente.  
 Me dio más miedo.  
 Tanto que rogué a Dios  
 Que nos agarra la Migra.  
 Cuando Migración nos agarró  
 Le di gracias a Dios.  
 El oficial me reconoció  
 Cuando llegamos a la oficina de migración.  
 Me dijo, "Bienvenido, Rosario, ¡gusto verte!  
 A mi papá lo encerraron.  
 A mi mamá a y a mí nos invitó un café  
 Se porto muy amable con nosotros.  
 Nos dijo "No los dejo salir por precaución  
 Nos dejo salir en la mañana."  
 Ese día tembló.  
 Se cayeron las paredes de la Cárcel  
 Y salió mi papá.  
 De allí, regresamos a mi casa en Michoacán.  
 Ese fue la primera vez que traté de pasar.

**Rosario Melchor**

## MI HISTORIA

Yo quise trabajar en un restorán.  
 Me pusieron a coser un arroz.  
 Me dieron un bulto de seis libras—  
 Es bastante para un sartén  
 De grande, pero no era suficiente,  
 El costal de arroz.  
 Me pasé a cocinarlo,  
 Eché todo el costal en el sartén  
 Sin lavarlo sin echarle aceite al sartén.  
 A los nueve minutos vi que estaba quemando.  
 Pues lo tiré y volví a hacer otro.  
 Entonces si le eche aceite.  
 Resultó bien, pero le puse agua,  
 Agua, más agua.  
 Se empezó a coser.  
 No hallaba donde poner tanto arroz que salía.  
 Aparte le puse piernas de pollo,  
 Salsa de pato.  
 Salió bueno.  
 Los africanos me pedían más  
 Me dejaban 20 dólares de propina.

**Francisco**

## ESTADOS UNIDOS ERA UN SUEÑO

Cosas materiales hechas realidad  
 Carro, negocio y dinero  
 Gran prosperidad.

Significó decir adiós a mi familia  
 Recuerdo ese día.  
 Mi corazón se quebraba por dentro,  
 Cuando sentí el calor de sus cuerpos en un abrazo.

Su amor y protección los perdí  
 Y me sentí desnuda sin su protección  
 Y mi corazón roto.

Mis ojos llenos de lagrimas  
 Dejando el terreno seguro  
 Para ver a un futuro incierto.

Estando esperando el avión  
 Un libro llamó mi atención:  
 "Quien se llevo mi queso",  
 Y por alguna razón  
 Por talas las manos paso  
 Cada uno de los inmigrantes lo comprendió.  
 Un reto se volvió

Al país vecino entré yo  
Dormir con personas que no  
conocía  
Y al asecho estaba todo el día.

Las horas pasaban y la historia se  
escribía  
Desconocidos empezamos  
Y amigos terminamos.

Cuando el camino empecé  
La oscuridad me acompañaba.  
Por el desierto pasé  
Arrastrándome en momentos  
Debajo de arbustos me escondí ,  
Cercas brinqué y en bajadas me  
resbalé.  
Por un túnel pasé  
Que no podía ver mi sombro.

Oscuridad incierta era  
Y tinieblas en mi alma,  
Pues no sabía donde andaba.  
Mi vida en manos del coyote  
estaba.

Llegamos a una zanja  
Un descanso empezó  
Todos exhaustos estábamos  
Muchos durmieron por unas horas,  
Y yo ni los ojos pegaba.

El sol salió y pude ver a mi  
alrededor.  
Con la luz el camino empezó de  
nuevo.  
Debajo de unos arbustos  
Esperando el atardecer  
Para continuar el sendero  
Y terminar la aventura.

**Verónica Cruz**



## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Assn. Inc, [www.midtownphillips.org](http://www.midtownphillips.org), In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Aubrey Donisch, Young Leaders Staff at St. Paul's, Artistic Director Luisa Cabello Hansel, the Semilla Center Board and Council of St. Paul's.

"The Phoenix of Phillips" is a publication of the Semilla Center for Healing and the Arts at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. For the past twelve years, Semilla has taught mosaics, mural arts, photography, puppetry and creative writing to nearly 3000 people and installed 25 murals and over 50 other artistic place holders in Phillips and beyond. Semilla means "seed" in Spanish, and it is our passion to plant seeds of hope, justice and beauty in our community. We do so, conscious of the challenges facing us, but more conscious of the great hope we have.

This activity is funded, in part, by an appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature with money from the State's general fund. It is also made possible by the support of many donors and friends, and support from Edina Community and Faith Lutheran Churches, and the Minneapolis Synod of the ELCA.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

on the Phillips Avenue of the Arts, Arts and Healing, and workshops in photography, creative writing, mosaics and murals:

### Iglesia Luterana San Pablo

St. Paul's Lutheran Church: 2742 15th Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55407  
612-724-3862

[semillacenter@gmail.com](mailto:semillacenter@gmail.com)

Face Book: Semilla Center

Twitter and Instagram: @semillacenter

## ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH WELCOMES YOU!

¡La Iglesia Luterana San Pablo te invita!

- English worship 10am
- Misa en español, 12pm
- Last Sunday of the month, 11 am bilingual, with pot luck

*Activities for children, youth and adults.*

*Actividades para niños, jóvenes y adultos.*

## YOU CAN FIND THE PHOENIX OF PHILLIPS AT THESE MINNEAPOLIS LOCATIONS:

- St. Paul's Lutheran, 2742 15th Ave S.
- Heart of the Beast, 1500 East Lake
- Quatrefoil Library, 1220 East Lake
- The Loft, 1011 Washington Ave S.
- Midtown Global Market, Eliot and Lake
- Our Saviour's Lutheran, 24th & Chicago



photo credit: Patrick Cabello Hansel

## ARTS IN THE BARRIO 2018 ARTE EN EL BARRIO 2018

A monthly gathering to celebrate the arts and each other. Una reunión mensual para celebrar los artes y la comunidad.

**Feb. 10: Valentine's Dinner and a Show**  
in conjunction with Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theater ([www.hobt.org](http://www.hobt.org)).  
¡Celebramos San Valentín!

**Mar. 17: St. Patrick's Day/Equinox Bonfire**  
Fogata del Día de San Patricio

April: National Poetry Month: watch for popups.  
**Open Mic on April 27.**  
Noche de Poesía y Música: 27 de Abril

**Apr 29: Painting & Prayer—Pintar y Orar**

**End of May: Dance Party! ¡Danza!**



## BE A POLLINATOR OF THE ARTS

Help support the work of the Semilla Center and The Phoenix of Phillips!  
Please consider one of these levels of support (numerical values are not a reflection of the artists' worth!):

**Diego Rivera: \$1,000**  
**Langston Hughes: \$500**  
**Walt Whitman: \$250**  
**Frida Kahlo: \$250**  
**Rabindranath Tagore: \$100**  
**Greek Chorus: Any amount**

Make checks out to:  
St Paul's Lutheran—Semilla Center,  
and mail to 2742 15th Ave S. Minneapolis,  
MN 55407, or donate on-line at:  
<https://givemn.org/project/semilla-center-for-healing-and-the-arts5a00ba73eed45>



## SUMMER 2018

Young Leaders! Day Camp! Trips! Block Party!  
Lake Street Open Streets! Public Art Installations!  
Classes in Creative Writing, Mosaics and  
Photography! Meditation Group!  
What's not to like!



## ADVERTISE IN THE PHOENIX!

Would you like to see your business or arts program reach up to 8,000 people?  
Place an ad in the next Phoenix of Phillips.  
Contact Katie Viscosi at  
[stpaulscreate@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulscreate@gmail.com) for information.