

I Am a Human Mask

poems and drawings from the 6th grade

created with poet, Jane LeCroy
from Teachers & Writers Collaborative

**PS/IS X218 Rafael Hernandez Dual Language Magnet School
1220 GERARD AVENUE, BRONX, NY 10452**

Class 603 * Fall 2017

Principal: **Sergio Caceres**
Art-Teacher: **Ms. Agramonte**

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Introduction

The wonderful art teacher, Ms. Agramonte, arranged for this arts residency for her students' mask making unit at PS/IS 218 in the Bronx. Lots of fun and deep philosophical discussions went into creating this book, "I am a Human Mask". The title comes from student Alexander Quito's poem. With a focus on masks, I visited class 603 four different times, including a trip to the Northwest-Coast-Indians wing at the American Museum of Natural History, where so many beautiful masks are on display.

Symbolism and metaphor are two literary devices that naturally align with masks. We read the poem "**The Clans**" by Richard Calmit Adams, that introduces imaginative thinking and offers some background about Native American culture that we saw reflected in the masks at the museum. We also read "**Hiding in the Mask**" by Ellen Bauer, an experimental poem that exemplifies the freedom and playfulness in creative writing unique to poetry. We studied mask poems (also known as persona poems), a form of poetry written from the perspective of being something else. I brought my own poem "**Behold**" written from the perspective of a mirror, and Dana Gioia's "**Becoming a Redwood**" written from the perspective of being a tree. We read "**I Am**" by Joanna Hewitt that explores symbols we might use to represent character traits. Zora Neale Hurston's passage personifying Death from her novel, "**Their Eyes Were Watching God**" offered an example of how rich descriptive language brings our ideas to life. Through imagination you can give life to an abstract noun, a concept, or inanimate thing. Poetry and art are empowering sources of communication and self-expression, as you will see here! Enjoy!

Thank you, Principal Carceras, Ms. Agramonte and class 603.

"Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."

-Oscar Wilde



Mask of Change

-Ashley Zamora

I am the mask of change
I wonder if I will ever find love
I hear people screaming of pain
I see blood and breath stopping
I want to make people happy to be with me
I am eternal
I pretend to be nice, but I can't
I feel happy when people die
I touch people when they die
I worry that people hate me
I cry when I am afraid of becoming alone
I need to be with all my souls
I understand people don't want to be with me
and that's okay
I say I don't hurt but I do hurt
I dream to be popular in everything
I try to make everything good, but I can't
I hope people learn that
I try not to harm them
I am death

Gold

-Elisa Volmar

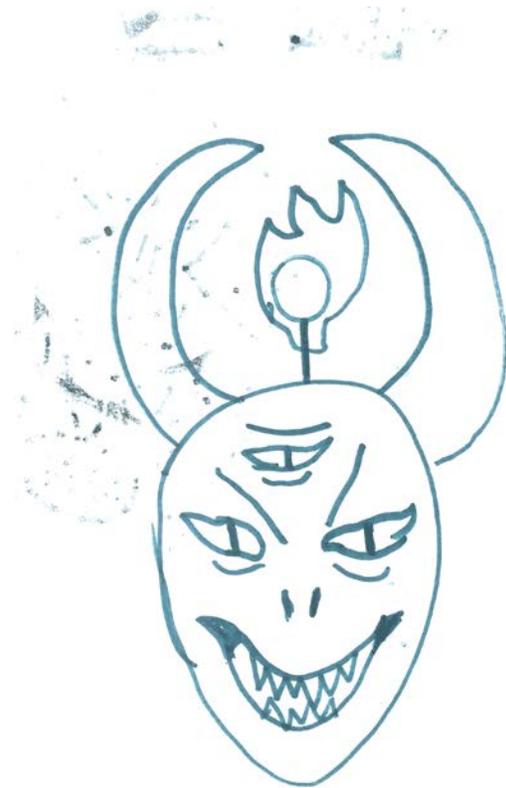
I make you look pretty
I seek Beauty
I can feel the warmth of the sun
your body and the breeze of the night
I can feel the warm air with the unusual smell
it is difficult for me to move on my own
but it is easy for me to create beauty
I think about myself being on my own
making myself beautiful
I've been here ever since the day you went
to that place
I might stay here for a long period of time
around me all I see is someone looking at themselves
changing my beautiful appearance
I am a part of you
I fear you taking me out and abandoning me
I love the feeling of the warm air
but I dream of being different



Reindeer

-Brad Vazquez

I see trees all around me
and hear crickets talking
so I don't feel alone
I have horns to protect me
I am used Santa moving in the saddle
my best friend talks to me
I eat grass while
Santa is delivering gifts



When you read with one voice reading the left side, the other voice in the same horizontal level, they are meant to be read at the same time. When you read with two voices, one side is quiet while the other side reads, until there are words.



Life

-Abedha Syeema

Living in gardens with plants
feeling the breeze in autumn
getting buried in snow in winter
the sun opening me in summer
I get the sun and rain in spring
I feed on water and sun
I am red
My bottom part is green
and it's on soil
People tear me up and pull me out
I have thorns, I may hurt you
but I am the life of love



Small to the Eye

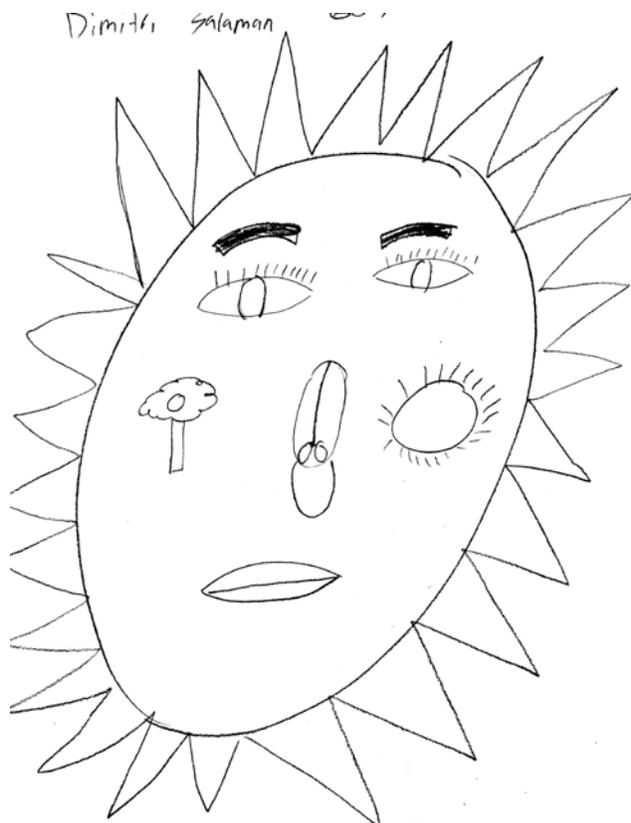
-Abedha Syeema

I sleep during the day
and am awake at night
people use telescopes to see me
there are millions of my twins
I am bright
I shine in the night
I am small to the human eye
but I am the star of my own show
I blend in with everyone
but I want to stand out
I live in the sky with planets and moons

When I Put on the Mask

-Daniel Santana

When I put on the mask,
it makes me mad. When I put on
the mask, it makes me crazy. When
I put on the mask, I feel and look
different. When I have the mask,
I can breathe under water.



Television

-Dimitri Salaman

I use electricity, I am plugged in
You can see many things inside
You can see love, you can see
violence, if you touch me
I will change channels
turn me off and I turn black
and my best friend is the remote
the remote is my friend
that can turn me on
he changes my channels
and my friend, the cable box,
lets me have cable

Have a Seat

-Dania Salto

I've been sawed
You use my body to place your bottom
Now, my legs are small
You feel the cushion of my body
Spilling food and drink all over me
I hate you when you dirty me
I am not only an object, I have feelings too
For two years, I have already been cracked
I dream to be bigger
and try to make others happy
but I am just your bottom's place
but not your face
I'm seen in a kitchen



The Tables are Turned

-Dania Salto

I am stiff
I am hard
I feel the weight of more
You see me at breakfast
You see me at lunch
You see me at dinner
I am stiff and hard

I hate it when you sit on me
that's what a chair is for
I have many legs,
I am stiff and hard

I like it at parties
You see me big or small
but when I am in the garbage
You don't see me at all

I am being sawed
I am being tortured
I am being killed
with no feet at all
I was recycled
with a new cycle
Now I am no more than a chair
I was stiff and hard

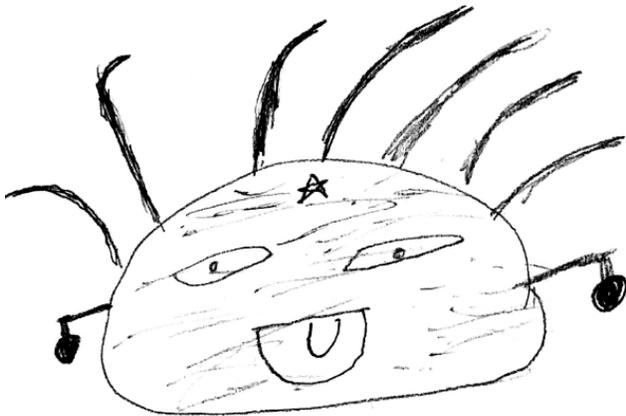
Clock

-Valerie Rodriguez

I've been hung
there are numbers on my body
I have a big and little hand
You always look at me
I tell you if you need to hurry up
I wonder if I will be here forever
I am science
Glass surrounds my body
I go fast when you are having fun
I go slow when you are bored
I am time



Head of a puppet
Figure



The Rock

-Jose Rodriguez

Hard and gray, very dusty
and maybe big or very small
touch me, I am rough
super dirty from being the ground
If you try to pick me up, you will
need to be very strong
I am a rock

Sunlight

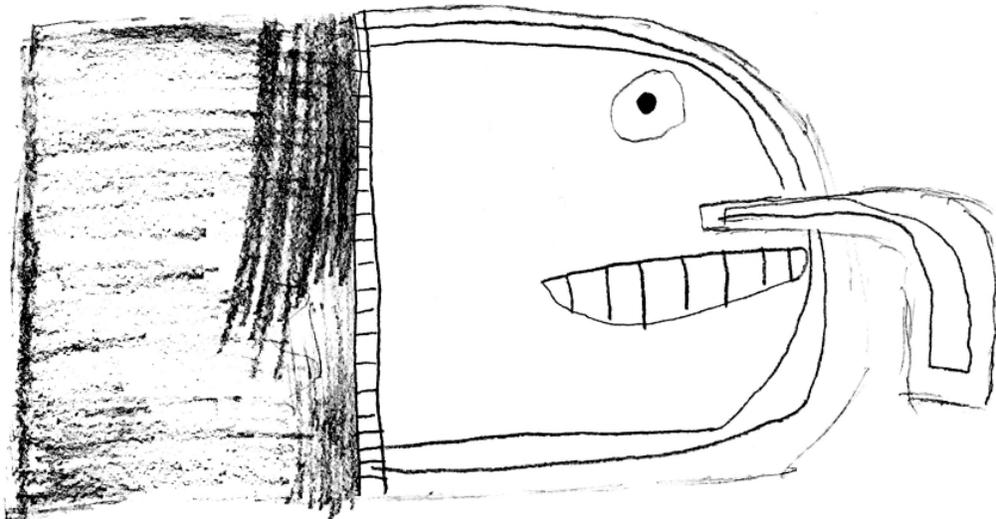
-Brandon Reinoso

Big star in the sky
wondering what people think of me
I am the shine of you
sleep at night, awake at day
trying to give all my heat in winter
understanding in summer, you hate me
in winter, you believe in me
I hope you like my heat
I dream of living forever
I hope you understand in winter
if I don't give as much heat
I am still your sunlight

On Screen

-Brandon Reinoso

I get very bright when I get turned on
I get watched, I stream on color
I need cables to work, I turn on different
channels, I am controlled by remote
I get heated because they watch on me a lot
I come in different sizes and wait in a box
a long time until someone buys me
then I get to do my job
I rely on electricity to make me work
People enjoy me when they're bored
I make kids happy



I Am Makeup

-Jennifer Ramirez

I make you look fabulous
first, I cover your face with a liquid
that is your skin color
I want to make you blush
becoming the highlight of your day
I will make you feel perfect
now see, people use me every day
I pretend to be perfect but sometimes I fail
I always try to stand out



The mask was made with bones,
shells, ivory and wood.



Cloud

-Mahbuba Rahman

I'm not who you think I am
I'm millions of different things
I shift my look every second
to keep myself covered from others
who may objectify me

I'm really just a thing, but people see me
as ducks, boats, and much more
I am filled with tears,
and once I decide to let go, I pour
depending on the mode I'm in,
either water, or snow, or even sleet
when I really need to let go of things

I am the staring target
of those that wander
I am the background for the pop of color
in the sky

Sun

-Mahbuba Rahman

The source of fun
that is told to brighten up the day
yet people are still in distress
the day I shine through
at night, I'm not even thought to be open
I'm the light of everything
at night, the moon replaces
my full heat of life
but the moon who is sometimes not full
is somehow able to replace me
I'm good for you but can burn you
Every time a cloud comes in front of me,
I scream, and am able to shine through



My Mask

-Raul Mella

When I put on a mask, it gets scary
When I put on a mask, it can get happy
My mask has hair and a big smile
It will scare you until the time of your death

Human Mask

-Alexander Quito

I am a human mask, I wonder
what happens around me
I hear laughter as people put me on
and take me outside
I want to be a human being
but I am a human mask

I pretend I'm human, I feel
I deserve more,
I touch the air with a hand I don't have
I worry I'll get hurt
I cry that my dreams can't come true
I am a human mask

I understand I have to accept myself
I say to myself, I can't do it
I dream of being human
I try to be safe
I hope I can change
I am a human mask



Flower

-Meliza Martinez Romero

Grow in the field, stay there
until I grow, the butterflies that fly
everywhere in the sky

All the visitors come and see me
Some even want me
but they can't keep me

Yes, it is hard for me to stay still in the field
because it snows, and I freeze
but in summer, I shine like a star

I wonder if I am the most special
I want the visitors to look at me
touch me, do not bother with the others

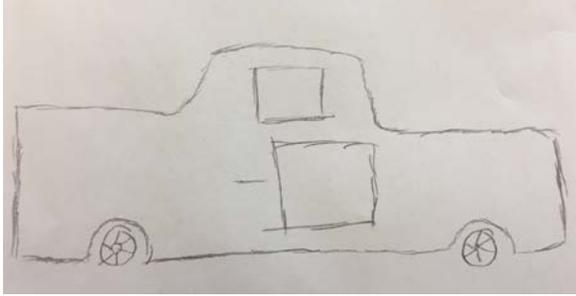
I hope there are others like me
but I worry that there will be
prettier flowers than me



The Thing I lost and Found

-Ashley Leal

I feel the wind
I come from a bird
I am everywhere
I keep you warm
but I feel from you how I was lonely
until you found me
Now, I'm in your head, not as warm
but I like you & you like me
we fight together
we ride together
I thank you & you thank me
I will stay with you & you will stay
with me



Car

-Melany Jimenez

I see possibilities where there are roads
using maps, I follow those
GPS changed my life
everything is different now
I need my driver, or I can't go
I drive you to places
I need my engine
I have seats to be comfortable
I need jangling keys to wake me up
I need gas to stay alive

Book

-Evelyn Garcia

Use me to make you learn
I am full of letters on every page
to make you intelligent, for you to be able
to know

You make me feel happy when you use me
I hate it when I am being ripped
I am being flipped back and forth every time

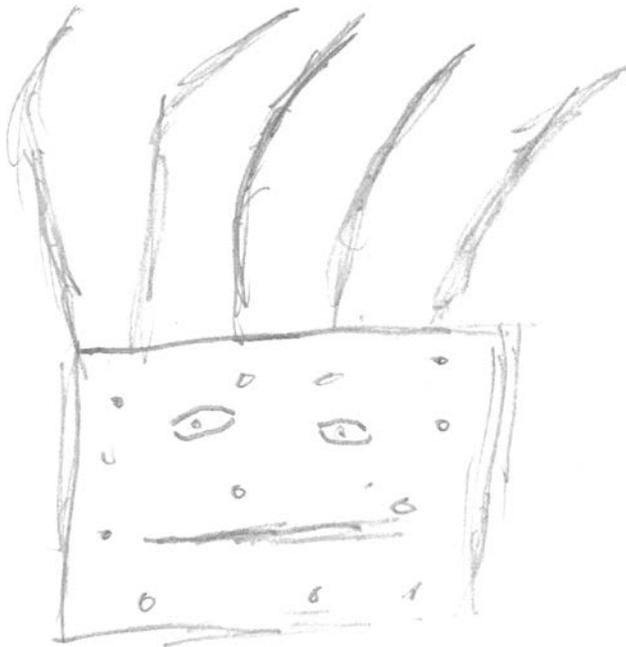
I am passed to others who have yet to know
me, I get sent to schools
where I see others, who look like me



Old Glory

-Jimmy Garcia

red, white, and
blue it can
start war
it can
bring peace
my mask can
do all kinds of things
I love my mask



Flower

-Kayla Familia

I am beautiful how I am,
my petals very colorful
like a nice graffiti wall
trying to be bright
like a shining sun.
I like when people put me in
their hair for fun.
Use me as a present,
very romantic on a special day,
use me in that way.
Please, put me in the dirt
and I hope to live forever.

Balloon

-Briana Garcia

I've been tied down, stopped from floating away,
no longer free. All I've heard is little kids screaming,
the loud music vibrating against my thin skin and I feel
like I'm going to pop. I come in several colors
used for celebrations. I've seen joy and sadness,
tears and smiles. I've memorized a bunch of songs.
How I've desired to be let go, to feel the cool breeze
and the light of the sun, to feel joy and finally have fun.
I have been threatened to be popped
just to make their voices drop, squeaky and small.
I've dreamed of the string on my eye being taken off,
so I can float away to wherever I want.





Closet

-Yesenia Gallardo

I am where you put your mess
the house of your clothes,
and I keep your toys
I am dark and you ignore me all the time
I am happy when you fix me
it makes me feel royal
I love being full of your things
it makes me feel responsible
I love to store what's important to you
I want to always be with you
I want to be your favorite place
I got used to darkness
when the doors were shut
I am your closet

Wind

-Yesenia Gallardo

I am what you need to survive
I am what flies, the one who sees the sway
I smell the bad and the good,
and carry them both
I feel the touch of the leaves and see
the people, the plants, the birds flying in me
I can be with the clouds
You feel satisfied when you come out in me
What am I? The wind



The Screen

-Anthony Dominguez

I am a black screen
I can project images
I have different channels,
an electric appliance that entertains you
I hear people laughing with joy
and feel glad to make people smile
I smell the air spinning through my body
and taste the feelings of the people
the heat of the electricity
Even at dark obscure times,
the people watch me
like I'm the only thing they have
they watch me, I watch them
I switch on and off
they are like my family, taking care of me
I entertain them

Makeup

-Lisandrea Diaz

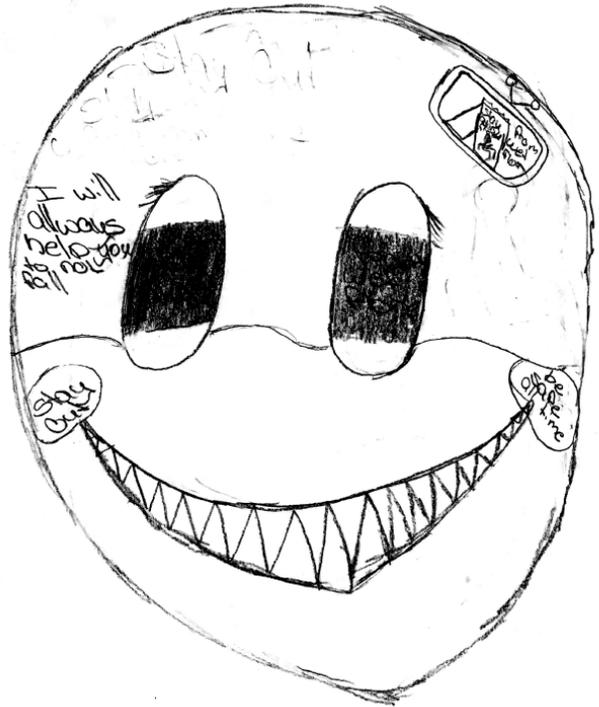
I am colorful
and make you look pretty
I kiss you with lipstick
and warm your cheeks with blush
I bring out your eyes with mascara
I help you get dates
with people you want to spend time with
I help you get attention and feel good
There are many brushes to apply me
I am in the store waiting for you to buy me
I feel sad when you remove me
and wash me down the drain



Radio

-Anneliese Cruz

I am standing on a table
What music are you going to put on me?
What dance are you doing?
Put it loud so everybody hears it,
the music of soulful sadness, movements
and the music of love
People dancing together
whatever you feel, love, sadness, or anger
I am playful and will play,
it will be night when you turn me off
but if you keep me going,
I will make you happy,
if you don't turn me off



Slippery When Wet

-Anneliese Cruz

Standing in a hallway, I keep people safe from
whatever might be on the floor
I am a sign, a warning

When people take a picture with their friends
I may be in the background, and it makes me happy
but they erase me because I was there, making it imperfect

I am something to keep people safe
but they slap me with their hands
and I'm bumped into by kids

Others that care pick me up
because what I am saying is important
When the floor dries, I say, "Bye bye"

I am strong enough that I will be used again
I keep people away from wet floors
Being out, doing that, is my life



Shoes

-Yasmani Cruz

every time someone puts me on
they stomp around, I die a little, every time

I came out smelling good but
when someone puts me on, I smell bad

I get scratched up, broken, used,
then thrown out in the garbage.

I live life, make you run fast, because of me,
you don't have to be bare feet in the street

Art Room

-Katherine Corcuera

I have closets, doors
students do crafts and I hold them to
display

I can hold paintings to dry
I have glue and hold paint brushes
I hold masks

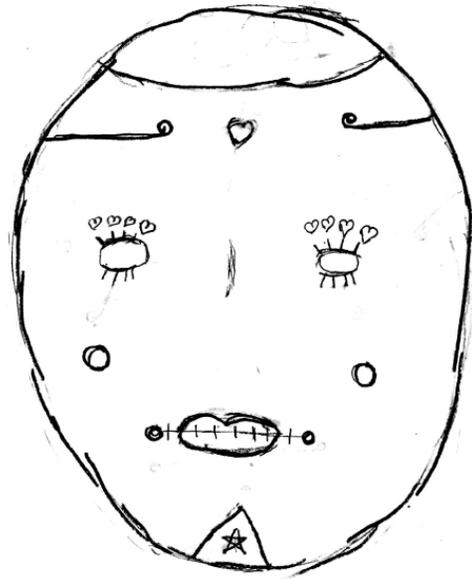
Students make designs
that make me messy

I have rules

I hold chairs

I hold labels

I prove, students are artists



Fear

-Eddy Beltre

Dogs can smell me on people
I see when you are going to cry, I see
what's up in your mind, I don't know
when it is going happen, but I know
what you're going to do, I hear what you want,
what you said to them, I know why you get mad
and what you tell yourself to be brave
I know what you think you need
I'm just here to help you realize
what you have to get past to keep on going

