



the learning trust
the future for education in Hackney



And Still I Rise

Hackney pupils and poets speak out
about enslavement

Introduction

Poets Adisa and Baden Prince took children from Hackney schools on a journey from Africa to the Caribbean and to Britain through music and poetry. Like Olaudah Equiano before them the children were taken from the slave forts in Ghana, through the 'door of no return' and loaded onto the slave ship. Shackled together in the dark the children listened to the poet's account of the terrible journey endured by enslaved African men, women and children.

To conclude the children explored the legacy of enslavement today and stepped forward with the spirit of the Jamaican Maroons to announce their dreams to the class.

Over 1200 children aged 7-11 years old from Hackney Primary schools took part in the poetry workshops held at Hackney Museum as part of Abolition 07.

The poems and images in this publication are their response to the journey with Adisa and Baden. Some are their initial responses written in very little time during the workshop. Others are poems written with greater reflection when back at school.

As Baden said, "I found inspiration in the same spirit of rebellion and resistance in the children's responses. Their reactions have been

universally respectful of the ancestors: their writing and artwork demonstrate the depth and power of their sometimes surprisingly mature reflections on their own experience."

- Maggie Hewitt, Mike Vance, and Emma Winch

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What is slavery?



People like us were taken away from our family and friends. We were enslaved. We were kids, adults and grandparents. We were taken to the

Caribbean Islands to cut sugarcane. The slave traders went to Britain to get guns, jewellery, then to Africa to load people onto the ships.

They changed our names to another name like 'Gift' or 'Nobody'. We no longer had freedom.

– Glenys Sausu

Slavery was not good for humankind. It was hard for them to work In the hot sun.

England took some people from the Gold Coast so they could be used as slaves working on sugar plantations In the hot sun.

When the slaves were loaded onto boats, they could barely breathe and nearly suffocated because they were squashed and In the hot sun.

Slaves were beaten to death whilst on board and chucked overboard In the hot sun.

How they missed their families and the hot sun of a new day!

- Devante, Dickson and Sufiyan

In Africa people were sold for tobacco, guns. If the African people were healthy they cost more. The British men got the African people to the Caribbean to grow sugarcane to go back to Britain. The African people were used as slaves.

- Elle O'Brien

In some parts of the world people's freedom is taken away and their lives become a misery.

- Mersije Gjyshinca

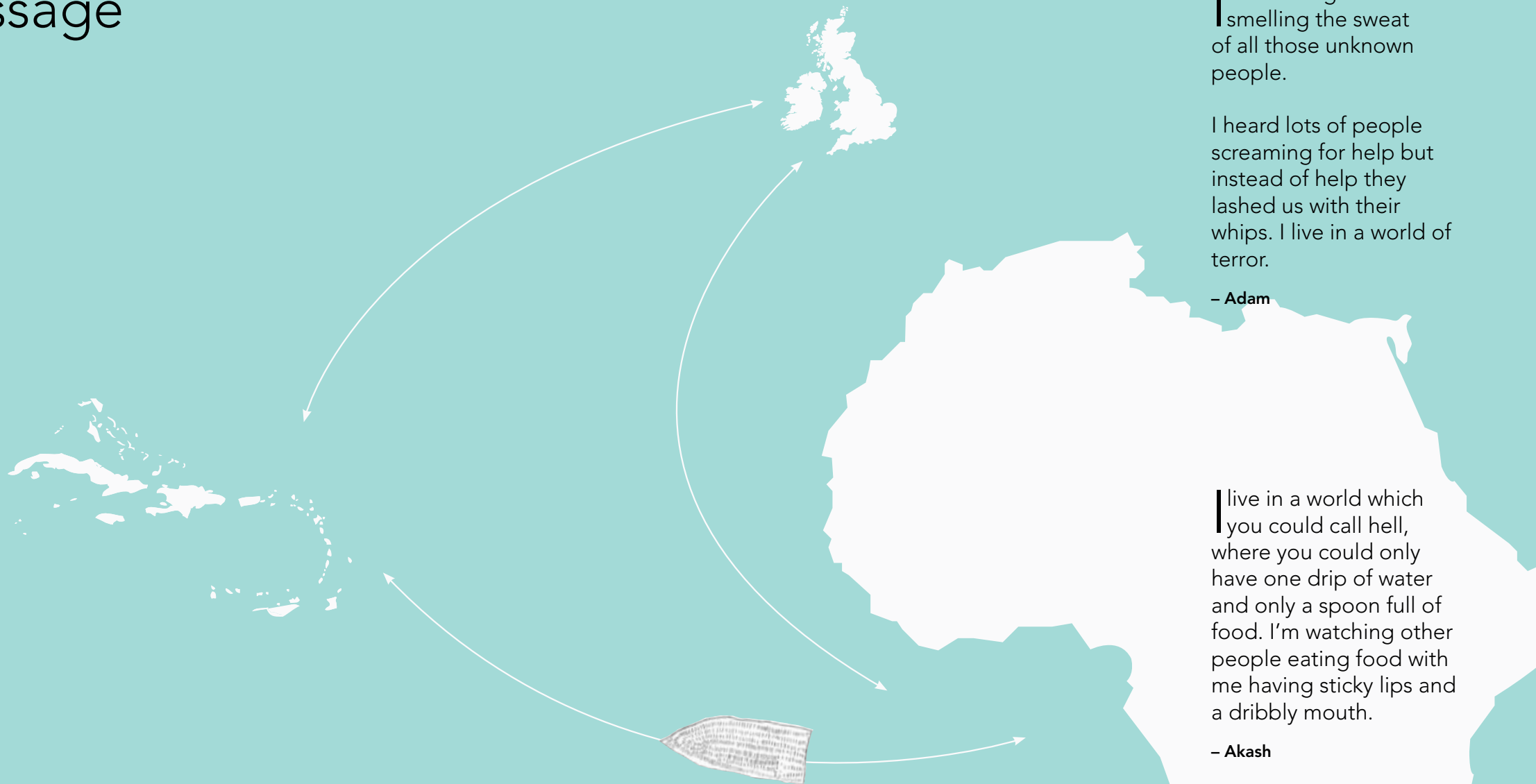


Andrew Mbuki

Middle Passage

I was feeling sad and hurt. I was also frightened that I was never going to see my family and friends again. My body felt like I was going to explode. I felt like killing the masters. I didn't know anyone else that was there. I could hardly breathe. I was locked in a dark room with other people smelling like their own waste, I felt like vomiting. The dark room was loud with the screaming of the scared people, it was...TERRIFYING

- Chrissy



I was feeling scared smelling the sweat of all those unknown people.

I heard lots of people screaming for help but instead of help they lashed us with their whips. I live in a world of terror.

- Adam

I live in a world which you could call hell, where you could only have one drip of water and only a spoon full of food. I'm watching other people eating food with me having sticky lips and a dribbly mouth.

- Akash

I feel afraid because I don't know what will happen to me.

I feel terrified because I can't live my own life anymore.

I feel frightened because I don't know where my family are.

I feel terrified because I can't breathe properly.

I feel frightened because I can smell people dying.

I feel angry because people are taking our rights and our freedom away.

- **Symone, Moiyad, Farzeen and Nafisa**

I felt scared because I feel I am going to die. I feel frightened because my heart is beating fast. I feel frustrated because I can't go to the toilet. I feel exhausted because the chains on my hands are taking the blood from my body. I feel afraid because my body had smallpox. I feel terrified because I can't stand up. I feel sad because my world has ended.

- **Amin**

Inside I feel like a scrap of meat being torn apart by a hungry tiger.

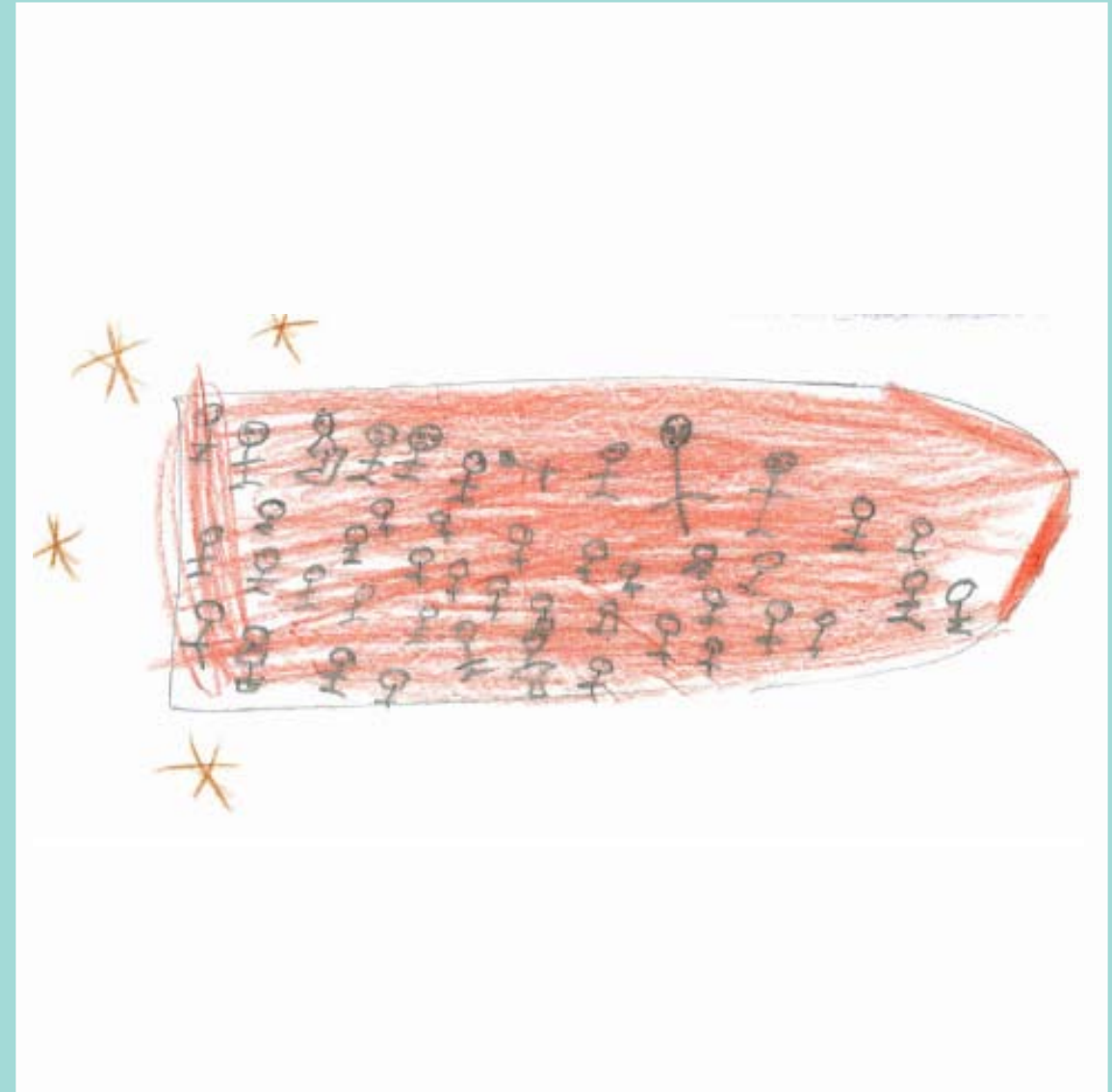
- **Ben**

I felt desperate, frightened. The door was called torture's gateway. I thought of my mother who nearly lost her life and my father who a long time ago (before I was born) almost lost his. Bound to the ground like a chicken in a slaughter house. I live in a world where I feel I have been separated from all hope.

- **Benjamin Wickes**

I taste death. I smell blood. I touch pain. I see torture. Inside I feel like a volcano about to erupt.

- **Faysal Mohamed**



It was like I was a pregnant person and I felt like my baby would die in my body to the foul smell of waste. It felt like my conscience was telling me to stay alive and believe in myself. It felt like my mother was also on the ship with me, clutching my hand and

telling me not to give up but I lost her and found out that she had thrown herself off the side of the boat in the early hours of her 50th birthday.

As soon as I had heard what had happened I knew that me and my baby had to survive.

My husband had been whipped to death because he had refused to be put on the 'slave ship'. Sometimes I consider myself lucky because my baby did survive until she was five years old.

– Selei Smalling



A Stolen Heart

A stolen heart
Taken from my home, also heart broken.

No one to love, no one to hold.
When your heart has just been stolen
Shackles on my feet, it's like living in hell.

In the dark for eight weeks
God reach out to me please!

No one to love, no one to hold
When your heart has just been stolen.

I miss my family, especially my mum
I don't know if I can go any further

But my lord God will be with me
I pray every day that we shall be set free.
No one to love, no one to hold
When your heart has just been stolen

– Shauna Yeboah



Maafa

I felt squashed and trapped in a dark cave. I was terrified on entering the door of no return. I felt like I was in a new world. I thought of the Lord my God, that he would help me out of the wickedness. It was the look of evil, the taste of peppers burning in my mouth the feeling a stranger and the smell of the a grave yard. There was praying and crying. You have to be tough and never give up!

– Eve Jaiyeola

The path of hell and fire

The journey was scary and dark. It felt so sad and I was upset. No space on the ship and it was hot inside, smelly like raw fish.

I had pain inside my body. My legs were hurting. Hell, hell, hell. I felt like a bird with no wings to fly into freedom.

My family, Allah and my friends. My voice was

making me strong by saying 'I can do this, nothing will be scary, I won't die. I will escape one day'. One day I'll see freedom, I'll take revenge. One day I will fly to heaven and have freedom in myself.

Death, horrid, living hell, hell on earth. It was like a nightmare, an everlasting nightmare.

– Tanzino

The door of death is a dead man zone. I live in a world of walking on fire. I need courage to survive.

– Khyro



Plantation

I live in a world
where pain grows
and grows,
blood drips from
innocent souls.

I live in a world
where black people are
treated like they're
not human, with no
heart or soul.

I live in a world
where black people
have no liberty to be
free and black people
are slaves for infinity.

I live in a world where
white people laugh
and black cry
white enjoy
and black die,
black have hope
but white just live a
good life saying
black people jokes.

I live in a world
Where people suffer
And pain grows
Blood forever drips
One day I believe that
Black will be free
for eternity.

- Diana

I live in a world of
hatred and pain.

A world where people
have no dignity for what
they've done.

A world where
enslavement fills the air.

A world where friendship
is broken.

And a world of sorrow
and sadness.

- Elizabeth Oyeleye



Sanike Facey

Hatred all around,
nothing but frowns.
Life is not worth living,
soldiers do the killing.

It feels like pins
through my veins,
my body in chains.
There's nothing but fear,
everyone's eyes in tears

- **Yaqub Ali**

I live in a world where
birds fly with fear

Where people are
enslaved.

- **Elixner Ozkul**

The hardship and
suffering of pain
is unequalled.

I toil in the fields for
over 12 hours a day,
and what do I earn?...
not a penny.

I watch others
being beaten,
for not doing
what they are told.

I have no choice, for
I am one of the enslaved.

- **William**

I do everything my
master says.

Cutting the sugarcane
12 hours a day.

Sad, lonely and lost
I feel my heart has
been torn away.

But I know in my heart
I have the strength
to carry on.

Outside I believe
I'm strong, I'll survive.

One day freedom
will come to me.

I could finally be who
I want to be.

- **Haseena Sadiq**



Tristan Lacille

My life as a slave

The slaves work hard on the farms and cotton fields.

Then have to come home to prepare their owner's meals.

Working so hard day and night, never getting any sleep, hardly getting a bite to eat.

Working so hard in the midday sun and bunching bananas for the farmers.

The poor slaves work when it's hot and sunny, hoping for some money.

– Sara and Lauren

I live in a world of pain, bruises and horrible sounds.

Happy masters being glad that they can get up every day beating us coloured people in a horrible way.

When I wake up straight way I have to get to doing my digging work.

Sometimes I feel like having revenge by standing up and saying 'No I will not do this work' but all I will get is more beats with the whip.

– Chrissy

I live in a world Where white people are best, I live in a world Where we have no rest.

I live in a world With no dignity, I live in a world Where I can't be me.

– Ayobamij

My life as a slave

Inside I feel like a stranger to myself.

– Amber Turner-Ramsey



I live in a world where
rain does not exist.
Nobody cares for me,
they beat me and whip me
As if I am bread
Being made,
they act as if I am
a dog growing old,
They 'll leave me to die...

My sad, sad world.
Full of loss.
I can't speak
my language.
I'm a slave
with no freedom.
I've got no rights.

– Stephen Akomeah

Inside, I feel like my guts
are wriggling away
from me, making me
want to throw up.
My heart is pounding
so fast that
my entire body shakes
I am trembling with fear.

My world is hell
a devil's den
a world of wrong rules.

– Jordan Davids

Outside, I believe that
one day I will be free
into the true world.
Hope has no voice.
I don't care if I have
to go with the others
following me with
weapons, I will be free.

– Adina Jaye

He is dying,
he wants to
get away.

He doesn't want
to be a slave.

He wants to be a man
who is brought up
in Africa.

– Sanike Facey

Torture, pain and
suffering.
A world of no honesty
of murder and all
things evil.
Inside I feel dead to
the world.

– Seth Krueger

I can hear people crying
for help, praying in
their hearts.
I thought that I was
going to die if I did not
get out of there
and claim back my
whole identity.

– Zainab



Screams for help,
sailing slaves.
Doom and unhappiness.
Inside I feel lost
like a newborn bird,
being separated from
its family
But outside I believe that
there will be
freedom, happiness.
My instrument, my voice
To set the captives free

– Agnes Adjoa and
Akwaboah Osafo-Adu

People treat other
people like dogs
And take away
their dignity.

I believe slave owners
really do have a heart
But they don't know
how to use it.

– Selei Smalling

The hard life

My life was priceless
I lived behind bars
My days went fast
As I watched them laugh
My skin was brown
Which made me down
Life is hard
Which left me scarred.

– Asman and Jordan

My weapons are
justice, intelligence,
leadership
To use when the people
are in charge
My world is horrible
It is a nightmare
It is real life
Right in front of me
Right here

– Deronne White

My weapon is my
courage,
to keep me strong
My weapon is my soul,
it will stay strong willed
My weapon is my life,
I will live it well
My weapon is my heart,
it will keep beating

My weapon is my faith,
I will believe in what
I choose

My weapon is my god,
I will not let him down

– Ava Margaret Coyle



We all have a connection to love that always brings us together no matter what. I was feeling safe when I was around my family and friends even in the worst times. Without my family and friends I know I will be very vulnerable.

– Peter

I am a slave
I have some weapons
They are my leadership
Hands and feet

My voice, heart
and dignity
My world is so sad
Because it is unfair
Nothing is my way
I have a dream to be
Away from this place
To be free, free, free!

– Ebony Smellie

Journey of mine

I was living in peace,
no harm be done
They come and threaten
me with big mean guns
They treat me
like an animal
push me for fun
For me, they've blocked
out the sun.

I'm stored in a cupboard,
no room to breathe
Family around me
start to heave.

Africa now gone,
no home I have,
Yet up above us,
English whites still laugh

It's not just the English,
Dutch as well
All of them making
my life a living hell

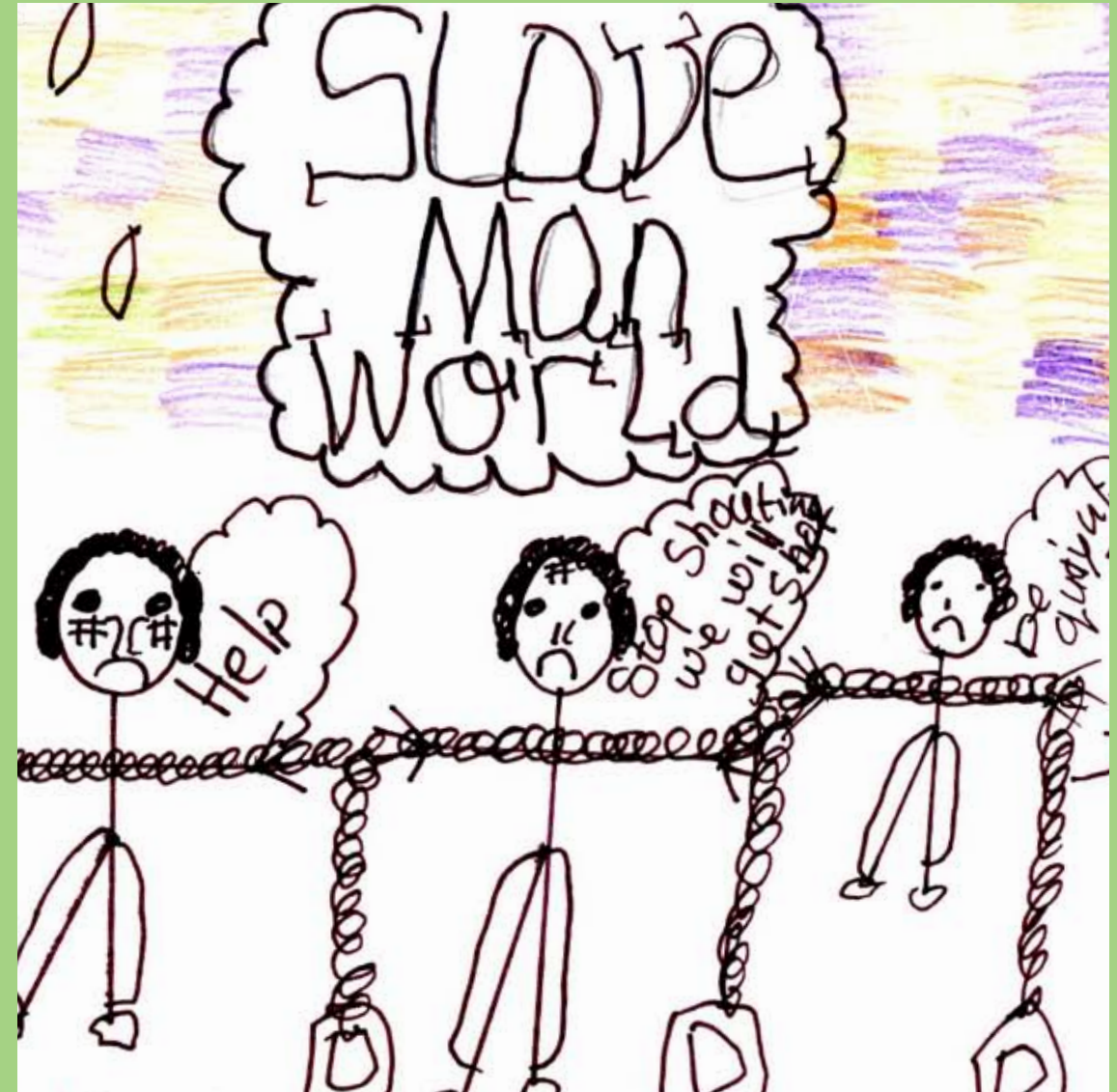
To the Americas
I'm taken,
laboured and worked
Unaware of the dangers
that followed and lurked.
I'm starved and beaten,
there's no
accommodation,
Anywhere I go,
across the nation.

Finally, I'm free at last,
Wilberforce,
what a spell he cast.

My tragedy has come
to an end,
Yet life, or home, has
no amend.

I trudge on, a brave
soldier in the dark,
I know one day
a light will spark.

– Joseph Tollington



Unal

Resistance

All me life me
been working
Night and Day
Me get up at 4.30
Me catch de water
Me haf no time
Fe play

Me mudder and
me fadder wuz slave
Dey pass down
de generation
If me lucky me get me
Cornmeal with bread

The lord know
Ah wan go in me 'ead
Me can never speak
Me am slave to me
Own kitchen
Me know me will be free
Some day
I in pain
I don't want to remain
A slave

– **Destiny**

Resistance

Tonight
Any night
I will escape.
I will take as many
as I can with me.
We will rise above
the fair skinned
And they will be crushed.
We will crush them
Or be crushed trying.

– **Sarra Said-Wardell**

Runaway slave

This person was crying,
This person
was dying.
His life was at stake,
He was about to
be baked.
Says he wants to
get his clothes and pack,
To run away and
never come back.
I read about Abolition,
I played Pro Evolution,
Fight for freedom.

– **Kelvin Oyenusi**



Bad man

I live in a world of hell!
With the bad man whippin'
Caught in the shackles
Where inside they are strippin'
The skin off my ankles

I will protect my people
So they don't go tricking
Down the drain is where
The bad man going
Want to jump off a cliff
Where the sea is crashing
MY FRIENDS COULDN'T
BEAR IT
THEY DIED
'CAUSE OF SUICIDE

– Abdur-Rahman Brooks

I was feeling horrified.
I just wish I was in their
place and was able to
stop them people from
doing that. I wish I had
made a difference and
was able to get people
to live together and
make peace not war.

When people made
slavery worse, I wanted
to stand up and speak
out so that I could
make people understand
so that we could
work together to
make a difference.

– Akash

I fight for freedom
My weapon is my
strength, inside and out

My weapon is my words,
my words will scream
and shout

My weapon is my friends,
they will stick by my side

My weapon is my hate,
for the people who lied

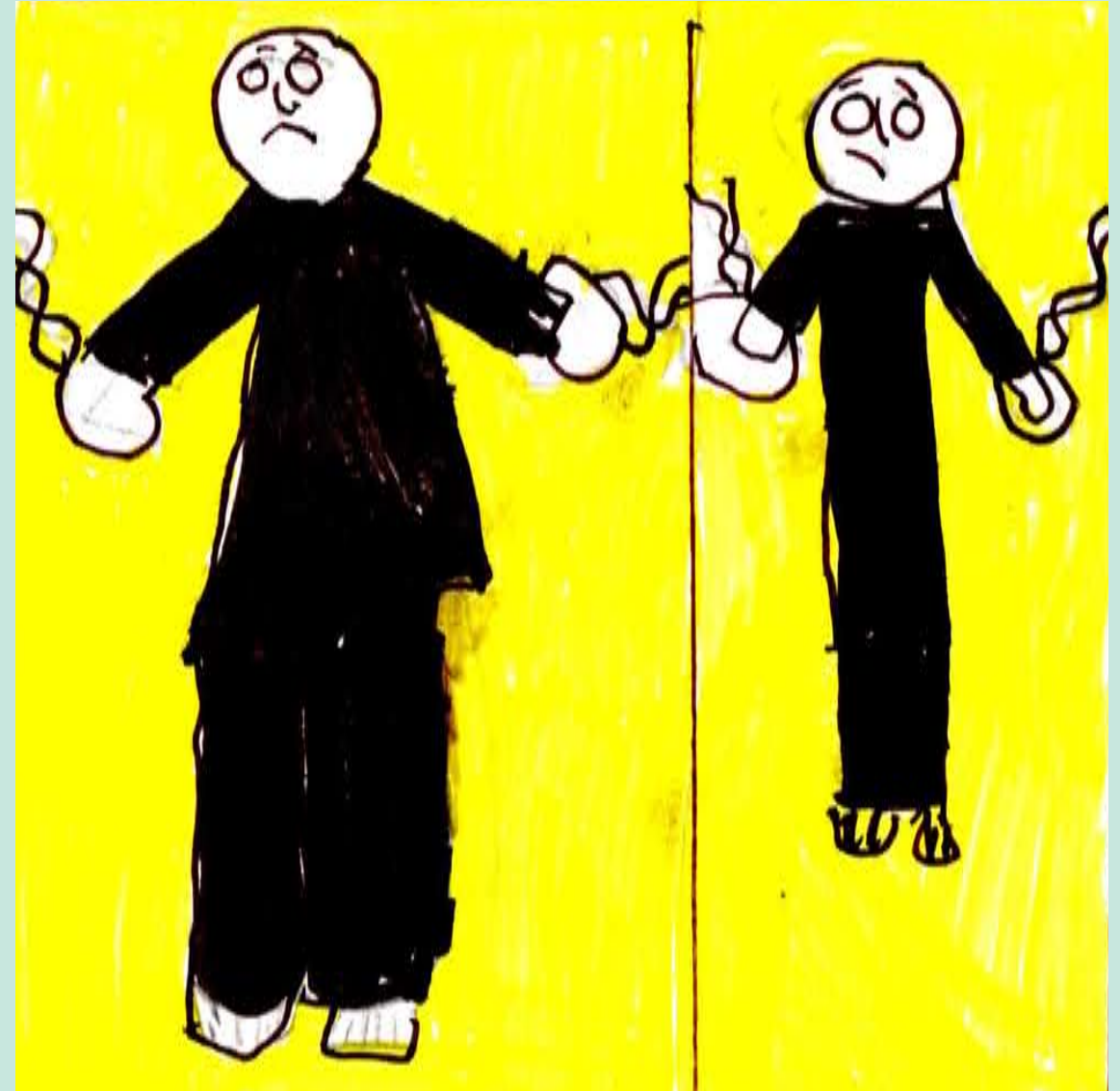
My weapon is my soul,
forever inside me

My weapon is my faith,
my faith is the key

My last weapon is
my stubbornness

I WILL NEVER
GIVE UP!!

– Lottie



The path of destruction

I live in a world where
fear is in everyone's eyes
Anger is in
everyone's hearts
I live in a world where
everyone feels like a
knife has been stabbed
into their backs
I live in a world where
people feel their heart
has gone missing
Inside people feel that
their lungs have turned
to ash
Inside people feel angry
and full of pain
Inside people feel that
their arms and legs have
been pulled off like a doll
Inside people feel that
their brain has been
pulled away
But outside I believe
that I can fight for my
freedom and escape to a
better place!
I will fight for my freedom!

– Mimmi Nostrom

The door to misery

I live in a world where
I don't know what my
food will taste like,
I live in a world where all
is see is pitch black,
I live in a world where
madness feels like
being dragged,
Dragged against
barbed wire viciously.
All I could smell was
the waste from my
acquaintances
around me,
They think we are animals,
People in pain including
myself especially,

I believe that there is
good in this world and
it is worth fighting for

– Seth Krueger

Moving around in our
small cage, food served
in a bucket.
I feel like there's no
tomorrow for me.
Why me? What did I do
to deserve this?
Why anyone? No one
deserves such madness.
All I need to survive is
my pen and paper,
To write songs and
express my feelings,
I guess I have someone,
well something,
My songs.

– Natalia Little

My instrument of
change is my
beatbox, my cacophony
Inside I feel I should
never give up
I should fight for my life

– Trayvond



Abolition

Slaves, no more

Abolition 07,
no more slaves!

Bad and evil people
trading metal and guns
for people,

Oh why do people have
to do this evil thing?

Let there be no
more slaves,

I want there to be no
more slaves

The abolition 07 must
stop slavery today,

I want abolition 07
to work,

Oh why is there such an
evil thing?

NO MORE SLAVES!

– Deniz Yildirim

They can't take my
freedom away from
me and I will keep my
spirit and belief and from
now to the day I die I
will stop the devil's work
of the people who have
enslaved me!

– Jamaal Otto

Enslavement will stop

Slaves are
captured people,
Lives at risk,
Abolition is a way
to stop,
Victory, we shall have
to stop enslavement,
Enslavement will stop
for ever.

– Dylan Owusu-Antwil

My crossroad

My crossroad
- don't know
where to go
My crossroad
- no-one to turn to
My crossroad
- slave master
as strong as a wall
My crossroad - faces
bravery like a lion
My crossroad
- bleeds in pain
My crossroad
- bleeds in pain
My crossroad finally a
place to go.

– William



Dreams

Danger, is what the slaves were in if they got punished.

Revenge is the word that the enslaved people were feeling.

Execution is a horrible word that describes the way a person is killed.

A dream is something you want to do when you get older. The slaves had a dream to be free.

My dream is to be a footballer and to play for Arsenal.

– Rajuel Smith-Miller

I will have freedom somehow
I'll have my rights and happiness
I'll fight for what I know.

– Shanaz

Dreams

Inside I feel like someone has turned my heart inside out
But outside I will never give in.

My instrument is my voice
I will sing and help others who don't have everything
My dream is to be a singer and a dancer
and teach people to be strong

– Haliyah

I will fight for freedom.
My weapon is my voice and my choice.
I will protect my people and I will not let them be enslaved.

– Max Hamilton

I will fight for freedom

My weapon is my pen
I encourage others to stop the slave trade
To stop enslaving people into hell, man made
My weapon is my word that will be heard.

My weapon is my voice that will encourage others
To help me on my mission
Of the slave trade abolition

– Rasharn Dubois



Freedom

I want to be free
I have to wash up
Clean, cook and look after their house
I'm tired and sick of it
I want to be free,
I have to take,
Being pushed around like a doll,
Being called a completely different name
And have to do jobs that I don't wanna do
I want to be free
I hate having to put up with Endless deaths,
suffering and racism
I want to be free
Inside I feel angry, upset, revengeful and very hurtful
When I am free
I will be able to do whatever I want to do,
When I want and where
I want
I want to be free

- Rashaun Antoine-Philip

Freedom means
the right to be
treated equally,
To have the right to
be safe and
not to live in fear.
To not be
kept imprisoned
living in poverty, captivity.
To not suffer racial insults
and to play with friends
of any colour.
To love and respect is
the way to freedom.
I am free to make
that dream a reality
for all children.

- Kemeisha

Me mama & papa were slaves,
Dey pass down de generation
If me lucky me get me,
Cornmeal with bread.

The lord knows,
Ah wah go in me head
Me can never speak,
Me an slave to me
Own kitchen,
Me know Me will be free,
Some day.
I am in pain,

I don't want to remain.

LONG WAH KITCHEN

Freedom is very important.
Freedom is precious.
Not a lot of people had freedom
But people fought for freedom.

Freedom is a luxury,
Freedom is available to anyone,
But it was not always that way,
We might take it for granted.

But people suffered for respect, rights and religion,
We don't suffer now because of those kind souls.
Now it is too easy to have freedom,
Never forget the people that wanted freedom.

– Aydin

Freedom means to be free
Rights, you have a right to an education
Equal, to be equal with everyone
Everyone has rights not to be enslaved
Don't take away our freedom, it means a lot
Our rights will make peace,
My peace
– Armani Williams

Feeling free
Respect
Equal
Evolution
Devotion
Optimistic
My rights
– Jonathan

Freedom is one of the best things in the world
Ready to do anything at any time
Equal rights should be spread around the world
Everybody around the world is exactly the same
Discipline should just be for cruel, mean, bad people
On every human body there's exactly the same feelings
My life is the best now in these days because I have my freedom

– Pavel



Roots and resistance quilt by De Beauvoir School

Maafa

My Lord God
Going through
the door of the devil
Feeling like I was alone
Suffering tastes like
metal in my mouth
But there the little
voice of my family
Keeping me
strong saying
"You are never alone
or going to die
Because the door of
the devil is closing
And the door of life
is opening."
Suffering feels like
someone killing me
Taking my rights away
Suffering smells like
rotten food
Like the food in
the buckets
Suffering looks like

someone dying
in front of me
Suffering sounds like
dogs howling
I live in a world where
everything goes
Round and round
not knowing
where to go
I want to be free!
But they have taken
my name
Taken my traditional ways
Taken me from the
Motherland
AFRICA FREE ME!
But the voice of the
white people
Inside I feel like a person
with no heart
My instrument my voice
of story and song
I'll keep my head held
high for tomorrow.

– Anon

My dream is for
children all over the
world to have a good life

– Nathan

Freewheel
Rights to learn,
Everyone has the right
to have an education,
Everyone has the right
to vote,
Discover the world
or country,
One love and joy
Make a choice

What does freedom
mean to you?

– Azizat Onayiga



Legacy

Why did it start?
What possessed
people to make
them suffer
We never hurt them
Is it us?
Is it them?
Who, why, where, what?
Why did they treat us
like dirt?
What did we do to them?
Is it us?
Is it them?
Who, why, where, what?
Who would want to
hurt a colour of
innocent people?
We never done anything
but be who we were

Who, why, where, what?
Why turn us against
each other
We never hurt them
They hurt their
souls, their skin and
segregated
whole families
Did they feel happy?
'Cause we don't
They were hurt
They have no soul!
They've destroyed us
Do you feel happy?
- **Kandakhe**



I am the gatekeeper

I am the aboriginal
painting
That once spoke
of divination
And the journey of
a boy becoming a man
The same painting
gathering dust on
a glass shelf
untouched by
a human hand

I am the gatekeeper
On these chess
board streets
The pawn that
became the king
Surveying the ocean
From the door of
no return
I sing in the key of win

I am the voice of trees
Whose limbs have
embraced dying men
who shared

the same hue
I am the scent of
sugar and rum
Crammed into
branded barrels
the misery of many
brings joy to a few

I am the buffalo soldier
Who defended
mother earth
When the children
tried to
cut out their
parents tongue

I am the great wall
of Zimbabwe
My spine a
house of stone
Needing no
media cement
I stand before my
final curtain alone

- Adisa



Diaspora

When I evaluate
the state of the race
in Diaspora
I feel inspired
not disheartened
nor despondent

When I meditate
upon the three-pronged
fate we've faced
displacement
unspeakable atrocities
attempted genocide
I feel elation
not anger bitterness
nor hate

For when I look around
I see

Black sea-captains
and heads of industry
headteachers artists

nuns and preachers
actors sculptors
singers musicians
poets and writers of
storybooks airline pilots
top chefs and cooks

librarians agrarians
I.C.T. programmers
and grammarians
organic farmers and
animal tamers
athletes ballers and
computer gamers

doctors lawyers
scientists and engineers
mentors inventors
explorers and pioneers
social workers barristers
prime ministers and
millionaires

I see a people
living in lightthe
flambeau* Resistance
burning bright

For I see with
unfettered eyes
a people whose hopes
and dreams never died
soul fires blazing, heads
held high
a proud race forever on
the rise

– **Baden Prince, June 2007**

Hear me now

Hear me now
see me now
What do you see
A history shame
A story to tame
A life of fear
Regreat or shame

Hear me now
See me know
What do I see?
You
Looking back at me
At a spirited women
A gifted women
A spirited presence
From Africa,
the Caribbean, the UK

Hear me now
See me now
A curly haired women
NO
A straight hair women
The colour of coco,
ebony, bronze
NO
The colour of the wood
I wea
See me now
Hear me now
A magical ancestral light
Held up bright
Not low
And tight
In the palm of 2007
See me now

Hear me now
I am spinning in a circle
I am chasing birds
I am the air
I am the spirit
Of the Island
I am the smell of
ripe mango's
I am the smell of
stewed lamb
And roast corn
See me
Hear me
Who do you see?
What do I see?
hear
Read what I have to say

– **Cheryl Bowen**

My Instrument my pen

My Instrument
my pen
A steel quill tied to a
hunters spear
Black blood squirts,
Through bamboo veins
Leaving tattoos on
the Papyrus
Of your soul

My instrument my pen
Ebony drumsticks
Beating
Afro-beat blues of
Redemption song
On Racism's
taught goatskin
Head

My instrument my pen
Scribbling Maat Laws

But they ain't new
They surfaced before
Like African Moors
Guided by Yemanja
Arriving on European
shores

My instrument my pen
Daubing murals
of inspiration
Of red black and
green landscapes
Refocusing your image
my nation
Shattering window pains
Of Mental
procrastination

My Instrument my pen
Engraving future
footprints

On our children's beach
Dousing flames of fear
Ignorance, and deceit;
Dunking metaphors
of love
Into plain paper baskets
Like wings were attached
to our feet

My Instrument my pen
Rapping griot tales
Round full moon fires
Re-Kindling the ancestors

Unifying our voices
In celebration choirs

– Adisa 1999

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