VISIONS

Writings by Adult New Readers of the Hillsborough Literacy Council

September 2002

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*Visions* is dedicated
to the students
of the
Hillsborough Literacy Council.
No matter where or when you begin
the lifelong journey of reading,
we are with you.
We applaud your courage and thank you
for the gifts you have given us.
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Introduction

Gloria Abrams, a founding member of the Literacy Council, launched *Visions* in 1991. Since then it has been a place of our new readers. That first collection was published in 1991. Today, we publish new pieces of writing and stories by students. We’ve published nearly 500 pieces, and it’s been quite a few years since the last year’s collection. We’ve been able to publish many of these works each year, and we hope to continue to do so in the future.

"Writing is the culmination of all emotions聚集于笔端", she said then. "It can sing for joy or cry for pain. It is the lifeblood of the soul, and it enables both the reader and the writer to connect.

Indeed, those first published pieces inspired us. They were full of frustration, confusion, fear, anger and joy. They were the stories of students of HLC, and they are not unlike the stories we publish in this year’s collection. All writers hope their works will be published with a universal message, and for those who have been published, the experience is especially fresh.

So hats off to our new readers! We appreciate your hard work and your willingness to write. We are grateful to the tutors who made this happen, and we encourage others still finding your voice to keep going. Remember, your voice will be heard. We’ll be listening!
Introduction

Gloria Abrams, a founding member of the Hillsborough Literacy Council, launched Visions in 1993 as a way to feature the work of our new readers. That first collection included poems, prose, essays and stories by students. We’ve published several issues of Visions, but it’s been quite a few years since the last one.

“Writing is the culmination of mind and heart and experience,” she said then. “It can sing for joy or cry in despair. Whatever the words, they enable both the reader and the writer.”

Indeed, those first published pieces expressed the joy, love, frustration, confusion, fear, anger and satisfaction experienced by students of HLC, and they are not unlike the feelings conveyed in this year’s collection. All writers hope their words will reach their readers with a universal message, and for these new writers, that hope is especially fresh.

So hats off to our new readers and writers, and infinite gratitude to the tutors who made this happen! We hope these words will encourage others still finding your voices to speak out, write, and be heard. We’ll be listening!
My Adventure in English

By Rosario Cortes

I came from Puerto Rico about two years ago. My reason was that my husband was sick and every time he was hospitalized my children who live in Tampa had to travel to P.R. They decided that we should come to Tampa for a vacation, then we could decide to stay.

We decided to stay here. I like it, but I didn’t know English. Always I was thinking if something happened to us how would I ask for help. I didn’t know anything in English, or if a person needed help from me how could I help. I was anxious by that.

One day my husband developed a chest pain. I didn’t know what I was going to do. I called 9-1-1. They were very nice and tried to understand me, but they didn’t understand me and I didn’t understand them. They came to my home. Imagine my situation, they asked but I couldn’t answer. In a moment I felt in my mind, “call your daughter.” I did, she was working. When she answered I gave the phone to the person who was in my home and they could communicate. Later they brought my husband to the Hospital. I went with them. When we arrived my daughter already was there waiting for us. My husband stayed in the Hospital for many weeks. This was the time most terrible in my life.

One day I was looking in the TV and read these words “English class.” I felt but it wasn’t what I believed. The advice was asking for a person who want to teach. I called the phone number that was in the TV. They would find out if there was a teacher that we could call every two weeks. We decided to go there.

Three months later I received a phone call from an English teacher. We called the Library, and my daughter went with me and my neighbor persons in the Public Library of Temple. She came. She met us and we met her. She was nice with us. That night our meeting began the English class. She was only because she had to move to Brandon. We began the English class.

Several months later my daughter and I are in the New Tampa Public Library we could call...
in my life.

One day I was looking in the Temple Terrace newspaper and I read these words “English class.” I felt happy and I asked my daughter, but it wasn’t what I believed. The advertisement said that they were asking for a person who want to teach English. Then my daughter called the phone number that was in the newspaper. She was told that they would find out if there was a teacher for me. In the Library said that we could call every two weeks. We did.

Three months later I received the good news. There was an English teacher. We called the Library and they gave us a date. My daughter went with me and my neighbor Josefina too. That night were 5 persons in the Public Library of Temple Terrace waiting for the teacher. She came. She met us and we met her. Her name was Alli Rudes. She was nice with us. That night our meeting was only for orientation and to get to know each other. Two days after my neighbor Josefina and I began the English class. She was only our teacher for a little while, because she had to move to Brandon and we couldn’t continue our English class.

Several months later my daughter received a notice that in New Tampa Public Library we could continue our English class. But I
was in P.R. because my husband had died and I went back to visit with my family there. The teacher started teaching my neighbor Josefina and she told Josefina that as soon as I came back to Tampa I could start class. As soon I came back I went to the English class to meet my teacher. The person who understood my situation and had patience with me. I am grateful that she gave me the opportunity to continue my English class. And that person is Mrs. Michele Sebi. Michele, God bless you and God bless the Hillsborough Literacy Program with all the Staff that permit us to reach our goal. One day I told Michele that my goal is to improve my English until I can talk like her.

Now some people say to me “I’m proud of you.” Others say “You are trying and doing good.” These words make me happy.

I want to tell everybody that if you have the same problem, never lose the hope. I recommend the Hillsborough Literacy Program. It is excellent. Never give up. Continue until you reach your goal. We have to be valient. Since August I have been going twice a week to the Senior Center Omar K. Lightfoot. The first time I went to the Center I didn’t speak with other people because I didn’t speak English and there were few people who spoke Spanish. Now I am volunteer at the Senior Center. I feel more sure in my English.

I, Rosario Cortes, never before Rico, at my age of 70 years old and learning English. For me it is like a dream to speak English to be realized.

Who Am I

Each day after my tutoring I go fishing. Most of the time I catch a lot of neighbors. The rest I cook and eat. My neighbors and study my vowels and blends instead promised her, though, that I will take new because she makes me proud to be a new

When I get to be a better reader.
I, Rosario Cortes, never before thought to be out of Puerto Rico, at my age of 70 years old and learning English. Do you believe it? For me it is like a dream to speak English very well, a dream that will be realized.

July 10, 2002

Who Am I?

Each day after my tutoring I go home, get my net, and go fishing. Most of the time I catch a lot of fish and I give some to my neighbors. The rest I cook and eat. My tutor would prefer that I read and study my vowels and blends instead of fishing. But I do not. I promised her, though, that I will take my school work more seriously because she makes me proud to be a new reader.

When I get to be a better reader, I will tell you my name.
I Love to Paint

By Dee Brantmyer

After I retired one of my aims was to see if I could paint. I had painted ceramics for 38 years. I often watched the painting classes on T.V. I’d say to myself, “I think I can do that.” As a senior I often passed the Life Enrichment Center which was for seniors. I often asked my friends if they would like to see what they had to offer. I never got a response so I said, “Well I’ll go by myself and this is the day.” What an exciting and inspirational day it turned out to be. When I entered the room where the artist were painting, a teacher was demonstrating how to paint a sunset. I was so intrigued. I must have looked pretty hungry to get started because a dear kind lady offered to share her paints, brushes and canvas with me. Thus my first painting turned out to be a sunset, but perhaps it should have been a sunrise because this was the beginning of a new venture for me.

I went out and bought all the essentials. I needed to begin my painting vocation. I been going to the center for almost 5 years. I really look forward to going every week.

My next painting was a scene from Maine. I did it from a photo I took when I was in Maine. It was an ocean scene. I gave the painting to my oldest son. He wanted it, as he could get, as the pictures he had are paintings you did, mom.” His remarks to get praise from your sons is something I always remember. My youngest son up north, I furnished him with paintings. It really makes me feel like I am doing something.

My oldest son is a golfer. He as a hole on the golf course in Augusta, Georgia. I made a golfing magazine. This was another challenge for him. Several people have seen it, off. I guess I did a good job. By the way, I sold a painting of a lion to a man every week and even before I had a painting every week and even before I had a painting every week and even before I had a painting every week and even before I had a painting every week. That he would like to buy it. I really didn’t expect he would like it. He had gone to the book. He was very upset with me when now since that time and he still is upset about my paintings.
painting to my oldest son. He wanted it, and said he wanted all of my paintings he could get, as the pictures he had were just pictures. "These are paintings you did, mom." His remarks were very motivating for me; to get praise from your sons is something very special. When I visited my youngest son up north, I furnished his house and office with my paintings. It really makes me feel like I am 10 feet tall.

My oldest son is a golfer. He asked me to paint a famous 13 hole on the golf course in Augusta, Georgia. He got the picture from a golfing magazine. This was another challenge but I was happy to do this for him. Several people have seen it, and have recognized it right off. I guess I did a good job. By the way I am a perfectionist in everything I do.

I sold a painting of a lion to a man. He had been watching my painting every week and even before I had finished painting it he said that he would like to buy it. I really didn’t want to sell it, as it was my son’s birthday present. He had gone to the library and picked it out of a book. He was very upset with me when I sold it. It’s been two years now since that time and he still is upset about it. As a rule, I don’t sell my paintings.
One month, I had a painting selected to be shown in the lobby of the Tampa Electric Company. It was a scene with pink mountains, snow, hills, and a little log cabin. There were a lot of trees with snow on them. I had one of my paintings in the Tampa Tribune, and two in the Carrollwood News. This was quite an honor for me. I surprised myself. The painting in the Tribune was an old fashion young lady, who was a florist. She was sitting on her porch surrounded by her floral arrangements. It was an oval bright painting, one of my favorites. One of the two in the Carrollwood News was of sunflowers, and the other was two horses in the mountains. By the way I changed the background two times with the horses. They just disappeared, and a cabin took their place. Then I was satisfied.

I am going to my son's wedding in August. I will be taking lots of picture of their beautiful mountains in Colorado. Then I will paint them when I get home. I love to paint. As an artist I am always looking through magazines and taking pictures so I can put together things to paint. I enjoy being an artist. People have been very complimentary about my work. When they finish complimenting me I feel very confident. My artist friends from the center are the greatest.

My Trip Out West

By Nancy Lea

I went on my trip on June 26 until the weather was good. I went from Tampa to Denver, Ole the new man in my life. I spent five days with Ole to the Marriot Hotel where we were staying. Ole took me to see Twin Peaks that over looked me to see the Golden Gate Bridge. It was the color of red. We drove across and through the city streets. We saw many degree slope and the street zigzags with buildings on both sides. The next day Ole took me on a trip through the city streets. We saw many Fisherman's Warf which has a restaurant town. We went to Little Italy which has a lot of food you can buy. We spent the next couple days watching the sunset.

After spending five days in San Francisco, we went to Vegas. We stayed at Caesar's Palace. We...
My Trip Out West

By Nancy Leasburg

I went on my trip on June 26 until July 4, 2002. The plane ride was good. I went from Tampa to Denver, then to San Francisco, to meet Ole the new man in my life. I spent five days in San Francisco. Ole took me to the Marriott Hotel where we were staying. It was a beautiful hotel. Ole took me to see Twin Peaks that overlooks the city. Then Ole took me to see the Golden Gate Bridge. It was tall, made out of cables and the color was red. We drove across and I took pictures while he was driving. The next day Ole took me to Lombard Street, where the street is the most crooked street in the world. Sharp turns happen on a 40 degree slope and the street zigzags with beautiful flowers and shrubs on both sides. The next day Ole took me on a cable car tour, which took us through the city streets. We saw many places and things. We saw Fisherman’s Warf which has a restaurant that serves the biggest crabs in town. We went to Little Italy which has a lot of Italian food and things you can buy. We spent the next couple of days just relaxing and watching the sunset.

After spending five days in San Francisco, we flew to Las Vegas. We stayed at Caesar’s Palace. While we were in Las Vegas we
saw three shows. One of the shows starred Gladys Knight. It was a
great show because she sang all my favorite songs. We also saw “Lords
of the Dance”. The tap dancing got me so excited, I wanted to get up
and dance. A comedy show was the last show that we saw. It made me
laugh, and that is hard to do.

We rented a motorcycle to ride to Hoover Dam. It took us
three hours, and it was a really hot day. We went to the top of Hoover
Dam and saw water generate electricity. We went back to the hotel and
drank while we sunbathed.

We came home on the 4th of July and while we were flying
into Tampa we got to see fire works from the plane. This was a good
experience for me. I never thought I would see so many wonderful
things in such a short time.

My Dreams Goals, Hopes

By Carmen Cint

I was born in the Dominican Repub.

I came to the U.S. When I was two I
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I have more then one goal, and I
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care of children. This will give me incom
 doing something that I love.

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My Dreams Goals, Hopes and Desires

By Carmen Cintron

I was born in the Dominican Republic.

I came to the U.S. When I was twenty one years old, I learned to speak English, but not to write English. That is why I am learning to write in English, and I will soon achieve my goals.

I have more then one goal, and I want to tell you about them. One of my dreams is to own a little business, and I will not stop until I achieve that goal.

Sometimes, I think that it is very crazy to have more then one dream or goal. One of the other dreams I want to achieve is to open a pre-school day care center. I have children of my own and I love taking care of children. This will give me income of my own and I will be doing something that I love.

Another dream I have is to go to school to learn other things that I always dreamed about. I always wanted to be a nurse. When I came to the U.S. I was told that it would be a piece of cake for me to become a nurse, but when I realized that I could not write in English, all my dreams crashed. Now it is different because I know my dreams and desires can come true.
My studies are making a big difference in my kids life. I know one of the ways I am making that happen is by doing what I’m doing. “Learning English.”

I am making a difference because I am helping my kids a lot with their homework and spelling. That for me, is a big difference.

When my daughter Ashley was in school for the first year I could not help her the way I wanted to. That is why it is very important for me to keep learning.

Achieving my goals is very important to me because that is my way of knowing that I am somebody that can make a difference in this world.

Achieving my goals means that I will be a better person because I will read a lot better than now. That will open a big door in my life. I hope I will be a better person tomorrow than I am today.

A First Letter

(Written after completing Laubach)

Dear God,

Thank you for this Day. Lord I want to say thank you for giving me and my kids. Help us to pray more often. O Lord! In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Yours, Truly,

(Student and tutor anonymous)
A First Letter

(Written after completing Laubach Way to Reading 2)

Dear God,

Thank you for this Day. Lord I want you to help me, Amen.

I need you in my life. I Thank you for the things you have given me and my kids. Help us to pray more and to look more for you,

O Lord! In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Yours, Truly,

(Student and tutor anonymous)
Homesick

Sometimes in our lives there are changes, eventhough we don’t want to we have to do it. For many important reasons like to improve and protect our family we have to leave any wonderful place and begin to build a new life.

I say wonderful place because of its beauty and variety of landscapes. It doesn’t have seasonal time but it has hot and cold weather all year; there are many mountains, rivers, valleys and it’s border by two oceans.

You can get fresh fruits and vegetables and cook delicious dishes with them. We produce one of the best coffee’s in the world and export it.

By the way we have several social, security and economy problems therefore exists a high percent of unemployment and many people have decided to move.

In conclusion, my country has different things to do and enjoy: music, food and the most important, kind people

It’s Colombia.

(Writer anonymous)

My Feelings About Myself as I read.

I’ve always felt like a blind man since I was young. Now that I’ve been in the Basic reading program I feel that my eyes are opening to the world around me. I am still somewhat blind, I think I’m starting to see.

I do believe that I’m a survivor since I’ve learned about myself by working full time at my job along with going to school the weekends. I also do mechanic work. All these things, I still think when I’m a better reader, I can do more things.

For me—the sky’s the limit!
My Feelings About Myself as Told to My Tutor

I’ve always felt like a blind man since I have not been able to read. Now that I’ve been in the Basic reading program for 1 1/2 years, I feel that my eyes are opening to the world around me. Even though I still am somewhat blind, I think I’m starting to see more and more.

I do believe that I’m a survivor since I’m able to provide for myself by working full time at my job along with raising livestock on the weekends. I also do mechanic work. Although I’m able to do these things, I still think when I’m a better reader, I can do more.

For me—the sky’s the limit!
Let's Talk About Love

By Sallie Lynn

Let's talk about love.

What is love? Can you buy it with money? No, you cannot buy love with money.

Love has come from the heart. Love also comes from the mother and father, for they sometimes tell their children they love them very much. Sometimes people do not know what love is. The family always says they love one another. A husband and wife tell one another that they love each other. But let me tell you all something about love, love is something that makes the heart sing.

Do you tell people you love them to get what you want? That is not the cool thing to do. Love people for who they are.

When I look at my grandchildren, I love them more and more and I have to tell them that. But I also tell them that God loves them, too.

Sometimes when we do bad things, God still loves us. Why does God love us when we do bad things? Come near and let me tell you. Because when I came to God my life got better.

Sometimes everyone loves themselves better than they love God. But God made us and I love him for that. He lets me learn how to read and I love him for that. I just love God. He gave me two beautiful children and I love him for that. Most of all, God loves every one of them—from the church house to the White House. God is just love.

What is love? Love is when someone who says that they love you comes from the heart. If you love me then don't hurt me. Love is when you forgive someone who is angry about you and is mad at you—now that is love. Love is when God let us wake up. Now that is love.

Love is someone who loves us all, and that is God. We as people need to love people for who they are and let them be.

If we do the will of God then we are telling God loves me and I love God so much because He gave me three grandchildren who I love so much. Then he gave me three grandchildren who I love so much. I love my soul and I love him for that.

When you are in love, what do you take about? Did you all think you would get married or just love?

You can not say that you love them when you're not loving them. How much love you can have for your children. Before you can love your family you must love the Lord. What do think love is? Love is when a mother loves her children. That is what you call love.
What is love?
Love is when someone who says that they love their children and that comes from the heart.
You don’t say that you love someone just to get what you want in life.
If you love me then don’t hurt me.
Love is when you forgive someone who is always saying bad things about you and is mad at you—now that is love.

Love is when God let us wake up.
Now that is love.

Love is someone who loves us all, and that is God.
We as people need to love people for who they are not for who we want them to be.

If we do the will of God then we are telling God that we love him, too.
God loves me and I love God so much because he gave me two children and I love him for that.
Then he gave me three grandchildren who I love with all my heart and soul and I love him for that.

When you are in love, what do you take about?
Did you all think you would get married or you just wanted to be in love?

You can not say that you love them when you kill your children.
How much love you can have for your children? Explain.
Before you can love your family you must love yourself.
What do think love is?
Love is when a mother loves her children.
That is what you call love.
When you say that you love someone, don't play with them, let them know it.
Where is our love?
Can we say day-by-day that we love you or are we just saying it when we with something?
Then that is not love.

God who keeps your children safe.
That is what is called love.

When you need a friend and they are there, that is love.
And I can say that God he just love.

I am going to talk about love.
When God made man that was love.
And then God made woman and that was also love.
Then God gave us life and that was love.
God is just a loving God.

Flooded Waters

By John Roe

One rainy day my brother and I were swimming in a flooded creek. The creek was twenty feet, and the current was swift. But, as all young boys do, we felt invincible. We swept downstream. No one could know ahead. There was a fence crossing the channel. There were lily pads than I had ever seen. They were so big that we could actually walk on top of them, and they were larger than a football field, if not more. This channel was a dangerous place, if it knew we were coming. With every stroke to be going faster and faster. Suddenly, the fight for our lives began. Everything was in motion. We had only seconds to escape. We struggled to get out of the swift current. The next five minutes would change my outlook on afterlife. As a twelve year old boy, I struggled with my might to free myself from the hand of death. It’s grip on me. This is when, for a
Flooded Waters

By John Roe

One rainy day my brother and I, with three friends, were swimming in a flooded creek. The creek water had risen fifteen to twenty feet, and the current was swifter than we could imagine. But, as all young boys do, we felt invincible. We were quickly swept downstream. No one could know or see the danger that lay ahead. There was a fence crossing the creek which caught more lily pads than I had ever seen. They were backed up so thick, you could actually walk on top of them, and the length was as long as a football field, if not more. This chamber of death lay waiting as if it knew we were coming. With every twist and turn we seemed to be going faster and faster. Suddenly, one of us yelled out, and the fight for our lives began. Everything seemed to turn into slow motion. We had only seconds to escape. As the five of us struggled to get out of the swift current, I was pulled under. The next five minutes would change my outlook on life, or perhaps the afterlife. As a twelve year old boy, I struggled and fought with all my might to free myself from the hands of death that clearly had its grip on me. This is when, for a brief moment, I was
given a front row seat to it all. I seemed to be floating above the trees and looking down upon my brother and friends who were standing on top of the lily pads. They were frantically ripping and pulling at them as my lifeless body floated beneath them. That is one sight I will never forget. Then, for no apparent reason, as fast as the horror began, my lifeless body, covered with some kind of slime, popped through a small hole, and I was pulled from the clutches of death.

Most people would simply call it a miracle. Privately, to myself, I began to wish I had drowned. Over the years I have asked God, even in anger why I was saved to be given the curse of being illiterate. I have wasted the past twenty-five years in self-pity, and blaming God. Finally, I got mad at myself and attacked my illiteracy like it was a big bully in a school yard, and gave it a bloody nose. The intimidation and fear that it once had over me is gone. The bully is still around, and from time to time he lets me know. But, soon he will be forced to leave the school yard for good.

Dear my children

When I gave you the first happy moment, I will never forget the moment forever. It is true that my children bring me happiness. Your father and I feel the greatest happiness because of you.

I think the more you grow up, the more tenderness you have. I hope that you grow up healthfully in your body and mind, and you have a strong sense of responsibility.

You will have to always consider the feelings of others. Life is never easy way, but you should never give up.

You have to walk own your ways. I keep watching for your life and loving you forever.

with my love

From your mother

August 5, 2002
A Poem

By Miwako Kurumagawa

Dear my children

When I gave you the first hug…..
I will never forget the moment forever.
It is true that my children bring me happiness.
Your father and I feel the greatest happiness
because of you.

I think the more you grow up,
the more tenderness you have.
I hope that you grow up healthily in
your body and mind, and you have
a strong sense of responsibility.

You will have to always consider
the feelings of others. Life is never
easy way, but you should never give up.

You have to walk own your way.
I keep watching for your life and
loving you forever.

with my love

From your mother

August 5, 2002
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