GREAT WORLD TEXTS 2010

Great World Texts is a collaboration between NYU Gallatin’s Writing Program faculty and students and New York City public high school teachers and students. Each year we choose a canonical work or "contemporary classic," and develop complementary multimedia classroom resources.

Through a special tutorial, undergraduate students become mentors in the high schools, assisting in the reading, discussing and writing about the text. Over the course of the semester, the mentors assist the high school students in developing writing projects inspired by the book.

In 2010, our third year, participants worked on Gabriel García Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold, and students developed creative writing projects exploring magical realism and the everyday, experimental narrative strategies and the role of the bystander.

Student Writing from Henry Street School for International Studies

Erin McMahon, Principal
Ramsey Wise, Teacher

Gallatin Undergraduate Mentors at Henry Street School for International Studies

Nick Glastonbury
Madeleine Witenberg

NYU Staff for Great World Texts

Marie Cruz Soto, Faculty Advisor, Gallatin School
Stacy Pies, Writing Committee Chair, Gallatin School
June Foley, Writing Program Director, Gallatin School
Rosa Pietanza, Coordinator for Partnership Schools
Molly Kleiman, Writing Program Coordinator, Gallatin School
Evan Commander, Project Coordinator, Gallatin School
I See in My Hands
STEPHANIE BLOUNT

I see in my hands a young, talented, confident young lady.
A bright light and crowded city.
A girl just ready to escape to a new world.
A strong exterior, but emotional creature waiting to transform.
I see a chair and there she sits and does work till the day they announce CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2011!
She will remember the small school, crowded hallways, and of course her lovely friends.
I see her hands, well, my hands, a girl that’s ready for whatever the world might bring her, when the world turns and she’s in the future.
For Harvey Milk
SENAIDA BONIFACIO

Born a leader
Nobody to fear but himself
Trying to fit in but it took him years to learn
That you cannot love anybody before you love yourself

As a senator his duties fulfill
But ended it all because of a dream
Trying to achieve happiness without caring about society’s views

He wanted a partner and gained death instead
All due to people’s stereotypes and misled
He was seeking to be stable
Wanted to rise and put all his cards on the table

Lived from coast to coast back and forth
Spending his time from Cali to New York
Until Dan White took it all away

It took five years of imprisonment for him to learn
But in the aftermath ended like his victim.
I See in My Hands
SHAQUORI BREWINGTON

I see in my hands . . .
The hands of one who fought for our beliefs and freedom
I see in my hands the hands of my antecedents
The ones who fought for our rights and independence
The ones who weren’t scared to stand for what we believe in
Without them civilization would not begin.
   I see in my hands the hands of the all time great
The one who loved to dictate and debate.
Dictate and debate for us as a whole
Dictate and debate about those who have no soul
So I stare into my hands not wondering why but I
Stare in my hands to bless all who cried
To thank my ancestors for getting me this far in my life
In my hands I hold life … MY LIFE !!
The Smell
JOHNATHAN CARABALLO

The smell…. 
The smell of death, 
The smell of horror, 
The smell of murder, 
The smell of liver sliced pieces,
The smell of completely destroyed pancreas,
The smell of deep stabbings that haunts Maria, 
The smell that the Vicario brothers can’t scrub off, 
The smell of something the dogs couldn’t even ignore, 
The smell of Santiago Nasar’s dead body.
Magical Realism
JOY CARDONA

I see in my hands,
The lives of those who came before me,
The ones who ran the streets
Who had all the power in their hands.

The hundreds of people
Who see in their hands
The cries of all the mothers who wished they’d done more
More for their children.

I see in my hands
The girl that was college bound
A brilliant mind that forgot to think twice
Who had too much fun and threw away her scholarship.

I see in my hands
All of my hopes and dreams
as well as the shattered ones of others.
The ball in my hand with untold riches
And the ingredients that make art,
I see in my hands
The vein that controls my heart,
In the same hand that has my handprint
That I will leave on this earth
And I see in my hands
My Future.
Magical Realism
GARSON CHAN

When I was 15  
I had a dream  
Of having the world  
In the palm of my hands  
I felt like I was the man  
When I was 16  
They call me Mr. President  
I am in control of everything  
So that makes me king  
Living a perfect life  
Doing anything I want  
Without hesitating  
When I was 17  
I felt fearless in my dreams  
Like if I was superman  
Unstoppable and immortal  
The world depended on me  
When I was 18  
I woke up from my dream  
I started to realize that  
Reality wasn’t as it was seen  
No more living in fantasy.
Love Letter
JONAS CUSTODIO

His name plays over and over
Again in my head
Bayardo, Bayardo, Bayardo.
As much as I try
I always cry when
I see remains of him pop up.
The music box he got me from
The raffle, sitting on the shelf.
The house he bought me, the
House he did everything in his
Power to get me. He left me alone
Here, But yet I can't seem to forget
Bayardo San Roman.
Here I grow old thinking, calling
His name, Bayardo. My biggest fear is
That all my efforts go to waste and that
My only true love does not return,
Bayardo San Roman.
Don’t beat around the bush
Honor is love
Touched by breath of tragedy
As proof of love I send you my tears
Soaked those who were closest to the edge
Powers of divination
Reconstruction of the facts
Unforgiving bloodthirstiness
Perceived glimmer of truth
Eager to carry out
Self assurance
Imaginative
Resolute
A falcon who chases a warlike crane can only hope for a life of pain
Magical Realism

JEREMY FERRAND

I wake up in the morning, so sleepy that
When I am walking I stumble like a drunk person. I brush my teeth,
I listen to the toothbrush talking to my teeth, the tooth brush say to the teeth
Get those stupid braces out of your teeth. I take a shower the water talk to me and
Say hurry up open those eyes.

I get out of the shower I put my clothes on, the sneakers says I don't want your
Stupid feet inside of me. I leave my house I go to the street I listen to sound of
The cars through the highway, I think in my head I talk to myself this sound is annoying,
I watch the people hurrying to go to work, I look up and I see the trees
Dancing back and forward and they look like they are going to fall on my head.

I take the train so crowded that even an insect can't move. I see people on
Their seats reading the newspaper and I hear a weird noise I look and I see
An old man snoring. I get off the train I walk to school. I see people sitting on
Their desks I see the pens and pencils talking to the notebooks, they tell each other my
thoughts. I hear the books talking. I talk to myself and realize that is part
Of life and whether I like it or not I have to do it every day.
The Love That We Share

JESSICA FOGLE

My love for you is oh so strong
I Angela, and you, Bayardo, do belong.
It is I who will love you forever.
It feels as if no one wants to see us together
This is not an obsession or just love no affection.
Even though things have been going wrong
We need to stick together and stay strong!
Death cannot keep us away
No matter what I am here to stay
I leave a kiss for you my dear
As I sit at home, think back, my eyes tear.
I love you, Bayardo San Romans
And I am going to change and do the best I can
I have to make a lot of changes so we can live a better life

Let's not ARGUE or FIGHT!
Lets come together and make things right.
fill this relationship with a lot of trust
Cause this new life we're going to live will be better
for us.
I see in my hands the world
I walk down the streets and people
are in awe of my presence
My school is nothing more than my
kingdom where my subjects refer to me as Overlord

I walk into the building, the massive structure
quakes with each step I take
Signaling the arrival of pure order and perfection,
a beacon of sovereignty, a monument of immortality

With each step I take, a shockwave strikes the hearts of men and women,
preparing them for the coming of true power
I See . . .
KEVIN HE

I see in my father's face,
Wrinkles,
Accumulated from the sleepless nights filled with work,
And the laughing and smiling from family reunions.
I see in my mother's eyes
How they light up every time she sees me.
Then night arrives…
I watch the moon rise and glow,
Glowing, from green to gold,
The color, ripe and rich.
All remains a mystery…

I stare blankly at my own hands,
And watched as my days pass me by,
Exchanging youth for experience,
Never an option to begin with.
In my hands…
I see time.
A Musical Death at the Dakota
JANEL HERRERA

John Lennon’s music reflects his life.
Politically rejected, yet lyrically accepted, by many.
Constant protests urged the government to perplex
His life, intensified by threats
And imminent judgments.
His image grew vivid,
This once timid
Man merely wanted peace.
This star was a super nova.
Shot five times in front of the Dakota.
He urged the people to “Imagine”
About political issues that could make one saddened.
Horrifically killed, yet he is still proficiently skilled.
Leader of the Beatles, I say, he is musically ill,
Demonstrated when “Give Peace a Chance” released.
Still heard throughout the world, although he is deceased.
Even though there was no funeral, respects are currently paid
While his music is played
And a statue in Havana, Cuba is displayed.
He was hopeful, determined, talented and clever
And for that, we will walk down memory lane and remember
Strawberry Fields Forever.
Looking out the window  
I observed the ever growing green climbing the wall  
Inch by inch as it’s creeping towards the roof  
Horrified, I felt a warm pulse through the glass  
  
Reaching towards an ending time  
Yet everyone acted as if nothing was amiss  
Trapped in this reality just like a caged bird  
My mind in a vortex of work  
  
I see my hands the overgrowth,  
Coiling around my arms and neck,  
Forever consuming me as time takes its toll  
An eternity
Days go past
My hand still goes
The piles keep building
Never sent you a letter
So I cherish them like gold
What's been going through my mind
Already isn't everything
That you've seen
So I fill these papers
With black and blue ink
Love or lust
Portrayal or trust
I wrote about it all
But it's never in the hands
Of the mailman knocking on your door
Kitty Genovese
SAIGE MATEO

She walks the night with nothing to mind,
Blindly being followed from close behind.
He creeps silently on common land,
to be damned as the man with the knife in his hand.
Her once light skin now covered in blood,
matched her piercing screams to the neighbors above.
Their eyes stared loudly with mouths quiet as dead,
as he runs off with the steel covered in red.
Her screams dimmed as she crawled for shelter,
so shocked to believe no one would help her.
The heartless killer sneaks back oh so fast,
to make sure the breath he saw Kitty take would be her last.
I see in my hands the laughter of my friends
With a loud burst, jumping out of their mouths
Which later turns into a gasp of air but I’ll
Always see the same thing
The Smile of a Friend

I see in my hands those who seek out conquest
These are the people who don’t appreciate recklessness
As well as excitement and happiness
They’re all born with the same look in their eyes
They’ll always have that piercing stare as if swords that
Are imbued in blazing flames are piercing your soul
This is known as The Glare of the Conqueror

I see in my hands the intellectual ones
These are the people that contain a quick thinking process
As if they were a cyborg
All choices in each situation would be revealed to them in a snap
Not half bad, for they are gifted with The Brain of a Genius

It may not seem like it but. . . . these 2 are surprisingly my friends
Hunting (A Love Poem from Angela Vicario)
ESTEPHANY PAYANO

I love you, my dear
I love you
My hand cramps as I write thousands of letters trying to explain this to you
My pillow is soaked with 17 years worth of tears for you
What else could explain this but love?
My mind, even when my mom beats me, is riddled with thoughts of you
My hands shake from not being able to touch you
What else could explain this but love?
From the moment you left you would forever be a part of me
I will never give up on you the same way you never gave up on me
nothing else could explain this but love.
My throat is sore from the endless screaming for you
My eyes, they burn, because they don’t get to see you
What else could explain this but love?
My heartbeat has had trouble going on without you
My life is full of rituals inspired by you
What else could explain this but love?
When I lost you, your charm finally got to me
just knowing you get my letters is enough for me
because nothing else could explain this but love.
My doubts were that I’d never love you
But now, you see, I’ve gone mad for you
What else could explain this but love?
Bayardo San Roman, my life has become you
This pain hurts less because I know it’s for you
What else could explain this but love?
You made love seem like a hunting game
and if that’s the case, the predator has become the prey
can anything else explain this but love?
No.
I love you, my dear
I love you.
Love Poem from Angela

SHANICE POLICANO

Dear Bayardo San Roman, the guy I miss. I’m lonely
I’m sorry I hurt you but myself as well
My honor is a disgrace
I just want to see your face one last time
Kiss your lips then you become mine
If you come back to me everything will be fine
I’ll be happy I don’t want to be lonely anymore
The nights that arrive till the sun arise
Tears fill my eyes I sit in a puddle
Think about you for what I have done I’m ashamed
When can I hear your voice
You’re on my mind
God your were so kind
I shouldn’t have hurt you I’m so foolish
Answer me how long is this going to take
I want you
I need you
I miss you
Please come back to me I just want to be with you and only you
I entered through the school doors barely making it, impossible to enter the building. It was as if the doors were like jaws opening and closing every second, someone enters due to the million of kids coming into the building.

In English class we were told to read a book. Just before I could stand up the bookshelf with its long arms grabbed me closer and closer for me to realize the million of options I had of books. I heard so many voices and sounds popping out, some sounded as if they were kids my age and others sounded as if a woman were writing a journal and speaking out loud. I heard sounds like bombs flying, people screaming, cries and cop car sirens. These voices fit in with the wide range of different types of books.

The hallways so long as if there is no ending, we are left clueless with many unanswered questions.
I See in My Hands
TEVIN RHEUBOTTOM

I see in my hands the hands of students.
The loud music they play on their iPods
sprinting up & down the basketball court
Seeing my friends dash across the handball court
I see in my hands their hunger
Food they chomp down
When they eat planet-sized meatballs
and spaghetti as long as Rapunzel's
hair.
I see in my hands the hands of their family
How their mothers’ bear-hugs are so tight
Loving siblings like there is no tomorrow
Teaching younger siblings the way of life
I see in my hands the hands of us.
I see in my hands the remaining color of all the broken objects around me,  
Now sucked away, leaving all dull and gray  
The sun hidden behind the clouds  
Slowly walking people with faces filled with frowns,  
This, I see in my hands,  
The sliding step of the slippery sidewalk  
Humans balancing their steps trying not to fall  
Colors drip from every building and every inch of the earth,  
Into the abyss of nothingness  
In my hands I see,  
The drops of pigment slide off of my palm,  
Unable to stain my skin, unable to stain anything  
Unable to find its place  
In the big emptiness of the atmosphere  
And like most of us here … lost.
Beautiful Monster
MALACHI RIDDICK

Things aren’t always the way they seem,
as if she stole my heart in my dreams.
She snatched my heart right
out of my chest, it’s like I couldn’t gasp for a breath.
The pain I felt when looking in her eyes,
came to me as such a surprise.
She was a beautiful monster haunting
my reality, it was uncertain if I could
escape from this tragedy.
Her beautiful claws appeared to be wrapped
around my heart, but I wish I’d known this
from the start…
I see in my hands
I see in my hands struggle
Past memories filled with pain and suffering
Consistent stress and arguing
Hurtful moments between my parents
And an unforgettable moment
I see in my hands my father
A consistent reminder
Bed for two filled with one broken woman and tears
A mirror that reflects a companionless son
“I see in my hands”
A younger me, with little appreciation towards life
Laying on my parents’ bed still in tune with the television
Next to my mother and father that often spoiled me
I see in my hands a more mature young man
Filled with knowledge which was learned from the past
To allow optimism for the future.
Poem of Angela
LING RONG YOU

My dear love, I’ve really have fallen in love by your prince charming look, and that kindness of yours.
Having to be alone through my past life, it made me thought of you more than ever before.
I have been so deeply miserable without you being by my side.
Would you consider coming back into my heart once again, and letting our relation start all over again?

For each second, minute, and even hours that flies away, my heart got torn down into pieces without having you beside me.
I’m walking through the days without a soul.
Ever since I realize how important I was to you, my life belongs with you, before you walk out of my world.
Every night and day, I’ve dreamed about having our own story.
Wishing upon the bright star, there I wish for your soul to fly back into my heart.

My tears hold the feeling about you; one drop can create a story of me and you.
My puzzle well never be complete without you, so come back as fast as road runner.
My world will be dark forever, till you come back with that flaming torch.
Chico Mendes  
LUIS SANTANA

Chico Mendes was a fighter and believer  
Stood up for what he thought was right,  
He had great intentions to do better.  
As an environmental activist  
Wanted to stop the burning of Brazilian rain forest  
And to save the plants and trees.

Chico Mendes was born in 1944  
And murdered in 1988  
His life taken away from him so shortly

Chico Mendes’s death made international headlines,  
All over the world they heard about what happened  
He will never be forgotten,  
But always remembered for what he stood up for  
As a fighter.
One night he asked me.  
I answered, without knowing why.  
The only thing I can remember: in the  
distance you can hear the noise of a lot of people.  
“We're going to kill Santiago.”  
I felt that I was the one who was  
going to die.  
The horrible death.  
When you sacrifice a steer you don't look  
into its eyes.
Dreams
RUBY TORRES

Dreamed,
Timber trees, Drizzle, Happy
Dreams
Airplanes flying through the almost trees.
She hadn't noticed any ominous augury
In those two dreams of her sons
In his dreams of trees.
He described the morning’s proceedings before his death.
But his death wasn't a dream.
Magical Realism: My Room
MELISSA TOXQUI

I’m in a magical place once I walk in my room.
The perfect little world made just for me.
The room turns into a paradise.

As I lie on my bed and look at the ceiling
The big white space above turns into a big beautiful night sky.
A dark shade of navy blue with big bright yellow stars
The bed, a big blanket on the sand
I begin to feel the warm breeze,
My hair slightly flowing along with it.
The ocean waves, soothing and peaceful.
A perfect way to relax.

My room is the perfect place to escape to
When I’m mad or sad.
My bed leading me into memories of my childhood,
Dream of fantasy worlds.

I can travel back in time.
Back to when I was three,
Playing in the snow back in Jersey,
Taking pictures on top of fake reindeer.
I can see it clearly, I can see it all.
Happy kinds of cheerful feelings.
My mood rapidly changes,
Smiles and laughs so sweet.
Instantly feeling better.

I can go further.
Maybe even back a century,
And walk around in big pretty dresses.

When I enter my room it transforms,
It transforms into a peaceful, quiet, happy place.
Where I can relax and just forget things.
It becomes a paradise, a princess’s palace,
Maybe the basement where I would play with my cousins.
A futuristic world where I’m in control.
It doesn’t matter much.
Every time I go there I feel so peaceful, I feel so calm.
All this happens in the magical little place I like to call my room.
Natalya’s Murder
DENZELL WASHINGTON

Not one of this world
Natalya Estemirova was her name
Human rights and political leader
Russian in her blood, the truth is what she sought
Working to uncover what light our eyes could not see
Silenced by those opposed to justice
From her home taken at night
She screamed and screamed
Thrown in a van never seen again
Sad as it is this is the world we live in
Where people don’t kill people but the act of righteousness does
To be abducted and found days later in the woods
Her body cold and motionless with two to the head
Estemirova’s legacy never forgotten
Her killers never found