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## Feature: Found Poems

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*DC's Friendship Collegiate Academy*

Zahyr Canty

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## Feature: Found Poems

### Authors

Matthew Ingram, Zahyr Canty, Kristian Edwards, Alayah Boothe, Antywon Cosby, and Gregory Simon

# Feature: Found Poems

*Gandy Dancer's* mission has always been about connection. As the literary journal of the SUNY system, we feature art and writing from all over the state, from Fredonia to Plattsburgh, from Suffolk County Community College to Brockport. Our goal is to bring together readers and writers and artists. For a special section in this issue, we reach farther, beyond the state borders, even.

We are delighted to bring you six poems by young writers, students at Friendship Collegiate Academy in Washington, DC. In their language arts class with teacher Donna Lewis Johnson, herself a writer, these students wrote the following “found” poems; that is, they composed poems drawing language from a newspaper article reporting a recent shooting. We encountered these poems and Lewis Johnson’s article about them in *The Washington Post* (“D.C. students’ ‘found’ poems reveal their weariness with gun violence, January 31, 2023.”)

While they are not SUNY students, we want to publish their work and honor it, as it says so much about gun violence, an epidemic that threatens us all. These poems don’t look away from what is difficult or upsetting, and they don’t let us look away, either. With understatement and grace, they demand accountability, action, response.

MATTHEW INGRAM

# Gunfire

Gunfire killed one man.  
Gunfire injured three others.  
Gunfire injured an 8-year-old child.

# Pow Pow

A grim ritual repeated often  
accountability for those  
involved, turning to a word  
used frequently as gunfire.

KRISTIAN EDWARDS

# A Wounded Community

Chief stood behind crime-scene tape  
across four lanes of Georgia Avenue  
rush hour brought to a halt  
Gunfire killed a man  
and injured a child

He recited the details  
and expressed anger  
He did so again  
and again  
and again  
A grim ritual  
he often repeated

He hoped the community demands  
“accountability”  
as gunfire generated headlines  
and claimed children’s lives  
turning said community  
to a wounded community

# Bloody Violence

January 3<sup>rd</sup> shooting  
expressed anger.

Stood behind crime-scene tape  
across four lanes of Georgia Avenue.

An 8-year-old child, including  
one man killed in the gunfire.

Gunfire has generated headlines and  
claimed children's lives.

shooting scene  
shooting scene  
shooting scene

behind the scene of Georgia Avenue

ANTYWON COSBY

# End Gun Violence

Stood behind crime-scene tape draped across four lanes Georgia Avenue  
the evening rush hour brought to an abrupt halt  
Gunfire that killed one man, injuring three others including an 8-year-old  
child  
He recalled sparse details of the January 3 shooting  
and expressed anger  
Grim ritual he has repeated often in his two years  
Wednesday after two children and a man were shot and wounded exiting a  
metrobus in  
Northeast D.C.  
Contee said he hoped the community demands accountability for those  
involved.



# No Violence Needed

The evening rush hour brought to an abrupt  
halt by the hail of gunfire  
that killed one man  
injured three others  
including an 8-year-old.  
Contee said he hoped  
the community demands  
“accountability.”