

ICONOCLAST ARTISTS PRESENTS

THEY SAY

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

ICONOCLAST ARTISTS PRESENTS



10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

2026

They Say 10th Anniversary Edition

Copyright 2026
All work is retained by individual authors and artists.
All rights reserved.


SHARPSTOWN
HIGH SCHOOL
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
10 Mar 17
DAKTRONICS
GALAXY
HOME

OUR HISTORY

Iconoclast Artists was founded in 2016 through the partnership of an El Salvadoran immigrant poet and a United Methodist pastor who shared a simple belief: young people deserve to be heard. What began as weekly creative writing instruction has grown into a sustained commitment to literacy, mentorship, and opportunity for students across Houston and Galveston. Today, IA serves middle and high school students through in-school, after-school, and summer programming that strengthens academic skills while encouraging young people to explore their own ideas, experiences, and aspirations.

Through a unique writing curriculum aligned with Texas educational standards and steady mentorship from teaching fellows, students improve their literacy skills and gain confidence from being listened to and taken seriously as authors.

Each spring, our annual THEY SAY celebration brings these young writers to the stage in partnership with cultural institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and leading venues in Galveston. The event culminates in the release of our student anthology, with proceeds supporting scholarships for our students.

As we mark our 10th anniversary in 2026, Iconoclast Artists celebrates serving nearly 9,000 students, engaging thousands of families, and publishing the work of over 456 young authors.This book honors the voices that have shaped our first decade — and the many more still to come.

UNTITLED

His accent is like a baby trying to
communicate with a grown up world
A hungry boy who spits and eats the alphabet
A picture into his first street,
his first language, an old rose in a cup
His accent never broke him down,
never let them take him away
His broken tongue hides another world
deaf ears cannot hear
His accent is terrible, they say,
he is a baby trying to
communicate in a grown up world

— Abdul Reda, 2016



VISION

On the highest mountain, in a dream
I was given word, that I would be led by a man with no name
A king that would give me the wisdom to lead my people
Their Mecca Their Heaven
The wisdom to find hidden angels in hell,
roses that grew from darkness
The Picassos with no confidence

I was told that I would be met by a man
whose patience matched his passion
Who smiles down the barrel of a gun
because he knows his message will live forever
Not a messiah, but a meaning
That's what I was told to give
to a heart,
that is falling out of love
To my peers,
who do anything just to be
To a world,
that has stopped

Upon waking up,
I was covered in sweat not from fear, but inspiration
Start recovering debts
and ever since that dream
I've put nothing to rest
The many secrets I kept
repent for all my sins
and hoping I could forget

The message is ever clear
and the right path is set
Evil whispers in my ears
it's trying to put my dreams to death

— Donald Val, 2016

UNTITLED

What is your name?

Where do you come from?

What brings you here?

Why don't you go back?

Where is your family?

When did you get here?

For what reason?

What are your passions?

What motivates you?

Who do you love?

Who do you love?

Who do you love?

Who loves you?

Who do you hate?

Do you hate?

What do you believe in?

What do you believe in?

Where do you belong?

What do you dream about?

Why does it matter?

— Liyjon De Silva, 2016

WAVES

This place is my playground
I swim in front of it
I stand between the lines
of weak and shallow

This place is my playground
I carousel around it's inevitable
I try to hold to its surroundings to find
no surrounding

This place is my playground
I call it whatever I want,
I wish somebody would...
The waves of this place is my gratification

This place is home, the ocean is home
because waves are my friends
and the ocean is friendly
this is what it's like to go back to the hood,
the ocean

— Torrance Hunter, 2016



WHAT'S POETRY?

It's a tragic love story
between a pencil, paper, and an eraser
How delicately the pencil kisses the paper
with its soft lips it describes what it wants
The paper smiles and gets delighted as it
gets filled with ideas and beliefs
about revolution and destruction

But the paper doesn't care because
so far there aren't any mistakes
It's the honeymoon phase, where the
only thing they see is each other

But then it's time for the eraser to kiss
off the pencil's mistakes,
to erase the magic and life
that the pencil had created

It's no longer the perfect love story
Because the paper is in love with the eraser
Because it's mystified at how justified
it is to come to delete any mistake

How it became a superhero when there was no hero written

There are smudges and wrinkles
The paper is imperfectly perfect but not enough
There goes the pencil trying to fix the mistakes,
but here comes the eraser and serenades
the paper telling it how it doesn't need this
pencil to walk all over them
Singing it a song of how possible it is to have a
clean sheet and begin all over again

Paper confused and in love
like anyone who was filled with dreams
just to get their heart broken
when a new paper takes the pencil and the eraser's heart.
It's always the optimistic ones with blank
slates that get filled and get
taken up and used for granted
But that's the majesty of it all
a beautiful tragic love story.

— Angela Galvez, 2016

FORGIVE

They hurt us, but we forgive
We lie to ourselves, saying it's fine, while we crumble inside
We are toxic to each other, but we can't stay away
Attacking one another leaving scars that will never heal

Saying I hate you, but meaning I love you
We're the hammer to the house, building each other up
Yet we're also the wreckers, tearing each other down
We say things we don't mean

I try to take it back,
but the damage has been done
But I will always be your soldier fighting for your happiness,
even if it kills me

— America Luna, 2017



CAPABLE

I believe in love
Even though I break my mama's heart,
I'm still capable of love
When my world falls apart,
I'm still capable of love

Even when I feel pain,
I'm still capable of love
Even if I get casted out,
I'm still capable of love

Even when I get knocked down,
I'm still capable of love
Even though they don't love me,
I'm still capable of love

Like everyone else,
I'm still capable of love

— Kevin W, 2017

DETENER LA GUERRA (Stop the War)

My guns are words

Each reload is a different thought
to the same issue

Kill me if you must,
but let my words leave a wound

Seek the cause
End it before my armor bag grows too much to carry

Call in the tanks,
because their bullets missed
Aiming for the temple,
but hitting limbs

Others died hiding, awaiting a nuclear attack

Seek the cause
before our bullets are blanks,
dig a trench
load your opinion
Shoot

— Eric Charles, 2017

PRIMERA HAMBURGUESA

Honduras suena hermoso, pero es doloroso
vivir en el campo, familias y niños sin conocer

qué significa la vida rápida,
películas y videos muestran el mundo
real sin informar acerca de mi mundo,
13 años y una decisión sin vuelta atrás,
tres semanas y sin conocer

acerca de la rapidez de las cocinas,
Guatemala, México aún era un cuento que,
narrado, tarde soleada combinada
con la oscuridad que se acercaba,
El río se miraba espantoso,

pero sin miedo en mi interior,
Cruzando y parando patrullas -
eso suena miedoso, pero es realidad,
500 inmigrantes atravesando caminos
desiertos, patrullas temían

por no tener espacio en su interior
todas las razas, día y noche pasó, casa nueva
suena a vida nueva,
almuerzo y qué es eso solo una experiencia
entre desconocidos,

12 de la mañana y una inesperada llamada
al comedor un sazón delicioso
Meseros listos para servir,
listas las amigas y ella súper
jugosa hermosa olorosa,

Aquel sueño era solo una realidad
que la verdad el estómago llenó.

— Darlin Sosa, 2017

FIRST HAMBURGER

Honduras sounds beautiful, but it is painful
living in the countryside, families and children who don't know

what the 'fast life' means,
movies and videos show the real world
without informing on my world,
13 years and a decision where there's no going back
three weeks and without knowing

anything about the speed of the kitchens,
Guatemala, Mexico was still a story that
told, a sunny afternoon combined
with the darkness that was approaching,
the river looked terrifying,

but without feeling fear on the inside,
crossing and stopping patrols -
that sounds scary, but it's reality,
500 immigrants crossing paths
deserts, patrols feared

because they did not have space on the inside
all races, day and night passed, new home
sounds like new life,
lunch and that is just one experience
among strangers,

midnight and an unexpected call
to the dining room a delicious seasoning
waiters ready to serve,
friends were ready and she was very
juicy beautiful sweet smelling

That dream was just a reality
that the truth is a full stomach.



The Moment My Mom Told Me About the Army Coming into Town (CONCEPCIÓN DE ORIENTE, EL SALVADOR-1985)

We'd wake up,
go outside and you'd still
see all of the dead bodies

On the ground.
Mothers and children, para orar por tu jefa
Wives all huddled over
Sobbing for their loved ones
we come back too

This only ever happened on days
when we weren't ready though
Most times we would see military
coming and rushing to hide in the jungle

We'd go chasing
after the hill in Honduras
until we'd see the last tank leave
this small town

— Tania Carrillo, 2018


THEY SAY
ICONOCLAST POETRY COLLECTION
VOL.3

SOY

La tierra, fértil, where la gente
wake up with a gallo song
We work siete dias a week
but I left -
to la tierra de las
oportunidades, where we come
a triunfar, where I have
no cama, ni mesa, where
my father suda
lagrimas
de donde my mother
said tu herencia is your
education
de donde we have to
work ten times harder than los
gringos, where they get
everything handed to them and I,
I have to work for it
I am from la tierra
sagrada, de donde
the musica es
autentica and la gente
humilde, from
Vicente Fernandez, Juan Gabriel and
Joan Sebastian, where
la bandera flies in tres colores -
una águila en medio
Soy de donde everything es
possible

— Diana Redonda, 2018

TRADITION

Tradition was to clean,
to cook for your family,
to need a man
to look out for

Grandma said
If I had myself together,
that's all I needed

She took out the pan

Took out the olive oil, carne,
and potatoes
Told me to turn
the stove on high, showed me

how to peel potatoes, to dice
She throws them in the pan
Puts the lid on

She said to leave them
for 20 minutes to
let them soften
She said to check on them

Periodically, the way I worry

Didn't want me to burn
the house down in orange

After the potatoes were soft,
she told me to get the carne
Flesh, get my flesh together

I gave it to her, all of it
My grandma threw everything

in with no specific measure
Said let it sit and stir
as long as the carne
is not pink anymore,

raw. A tierno dab of salt-
again, with no measure
She stirred a bit

“You have yourself together
now, why need a man?
Take on a new tradition.

Why need a man?

Remember, you are all
the meat and potatoes
you will ever need.”

— Alyssa Mendoza, 2018



HOW DO YOU MOVE FORWARD?

She ran in and ran out
My teacher
She ran in, ran out, and ran back in
Sat and paced at the same time
Mind racing, no focus

“We are under a lockdown”
For once it’s not a drill

She sat and paced and said
“At least you guys got stuck in a class with a couch in it”
I add on, to make everyone laugh, “Yeah, and coffee”
My teacher echoes, “Yeah... and coffee”

We sat
He cried
The first person I expected to be strong, cried

We sat
She cried
The first person I expected to be dazed, cried

We sat
He seethed
The first person I thought would be calm was angry

We sat
I cried
Because if the first person I thought would be strong,
and the first person I thought would be dazed,
and the first person I thought would be calm,
are not taking this well

Well,
I would cry
And I did,
until later that day,
stopping to act okay when my aunt called
“Rubi died at 5 today”

My second cousin
who was basically an aunt
Everyone has a couple of those

Now I have one less
Cancer is a bitch, huh?

Her last advice to us was to “Learn how to say no.”
My sister and I have an ongoing joke:
If someone wants us to do something, we look at each other
and say with childish voices, “I don’t want to”
Then we’ll chuckle and move on with our lives

How do you move forward with your life
when you’ve seen someone get shot?
How do you move forward with your life
when the strong become weak?
How do you move on with your life
when one of the few people you rarely saw,
who could change your life forever, changes your life forever,
by simply leaving, never to return?

I wish when my teacher ran in, I could pause time,
look down the street and say “I don’t want to”
and everything would have been okay

Everything would have been okay

— Imani Davenport, 2019





INVISIBLE INK

My friends are made of invisible ink
I see myself in the way they disappear

Sometimes they ask me,
“What’s your favorite flower?”
and I tell them
Middle Miss Camellia

I am made of soap
though some days I feel more like tears
I see my friends in the way I miss them

Sometimes I ask myself “Why?”
and the truth is, I don’t really care

We are made of air
though some days we feel more like helium

I see emptiness in the way we cry

— London Williams, 2019

MEMORIA

Anoche soñé sobre
Culpabilidad de los Sobrevivientes
Soñé sobre el crujir de dientes
De los muertos que se suben mientras duermes
Soñé con la tierra bajo mis pies
desapareciendo a cada paso que tomo

Miré alrededor y sentí los gritos de las personas
Viendo sus familiares siendo devorados por el suelo
Que una vez fue fuerte y confinable
Ahora estaba rajado y manchado de lágrimas
Manchado del rojo de nuestra sangre
Un terremoto de cuerpos siendo encontrados por los paramédicos
Muchos de los cuales ya estaban casi Muertos

En unos años este sueño se convirtió en una memoria
la cual se repetía en mis noches de culpa
por ser uno de los cuantos sobrevivientes

— Citlallic Silva, 2019

MEMORY

Last night I dreamed about
Survivors' Guilt
I dreamed with teeth grinding,
of the dead that rise up while you sleep
I dreamed of the earth under my feet,
disappearing with every step I take

I looked around and felt the cries of the people,
seeing their relatives devoured by the ground,
that once was strong and reliable
Now it was cracked and stained with tears,
stained from the red of our blood
An earthquake of bodies found by paramedics,
many of whom were almost dead

In a few years this dream became a memory
relived in my nights full of guilt
for being one of the few survivors

LA LUNA

En la noche sueño con los cuerpos que no tienen
alma ni opción en donde terminar su destino
La luna fuera de mi ventana se mira como
resplandece y ofrece una esperanza para las
personas desorientadas

Mi cuarto se siente lleno de paz y armonía,
pero al anochecer se convierte en
una caja llena de remordimientos
La obscuridad me dice que al final del día
uno se queda solo y enfrenta sus propias pesadillas

La vida es un juego macabro,
cuando das tu
último respiro comienza un nuevo misterio
Yo soy la que lucha contra mis
propios oscuros pensamientos

La noche canta de varias promesas y se ríe de
nuestra derrota

— Diana Tirado, 2019

THE MOON

At night, I dream of bodies with no
soul or options for their destiny
The moon outside my window
shines and offers hope for
the disoriented

My room feels full of peace and harmony,
but at nightfall it becomes
a box full of remorse
The dark tells me that at the end of the day
one is left alone, facing her own nightmares

Life is a gruesome game,
when you take your last breath, a new mystery begins
I am the one who fights against my
own dark thoughts

The night sings of promises and laughs at
our defeat

MI VIAJE

Mi viaje está lleno de espinas y la ley de la derrota empieza
De nada me sirvió seguir tus pasos
En mi viaje, me dejaste sin tus besos que los guardaba presos, aquí en mi corazón
En mi viaje me fui sin nada, sin contar con un amigo
Me fui por el camino sin saber volver, pero en mi viaje,
Me encontré con seres hermosos, mujeres que mataron los sueños que tenían
En mi camino, estoy naufragando en los mares que han formado mi tristeza

— Angel Domínguez, 2022

MY JOURNEY

My journey is full of thorns, and the law of defeat begins
It was useless to follow in your footsteps
In my journey, I was left without your kisses that I kept imprisoned here in my heart
I went on my journey with nothing, without counting on a friend
I went down the road not knowing how to return, but on my journey
I met beautiful beings, women who killed the dreams they had
On my path, I am adrift in the seas which have formed my sorrow

18

Quizás los rayos del sol sobre mí rostro aparentan 18 primaveras,
pero he vivido mil años buscando las palabras perfectas para mi
Como testigo, mí madre ha bebido mis lágrimas, y yo, con el corazón roto mil veces he caído

Y mil veces me he levantado sin que los brillos de mis ojos
dejaran de brillar cada vez quedo en la oscuridad
Dejé mis sandalias tiradas al lado de la fortuna en el bosque donde se vendían las inocencias
Luego nació la madurez y llegó con cajas de sorpresas

Dejé de sentir los años que estaba viviendo
Empecé a ver, a sentir
y disfrutar cada parpadeo de mis ojos

— Jessica Recinos, 2022

18

Maybe the rays of the sun on my face reflect 18 springs,
but I have lived a thousand years searching for the perfect words for me
As a witness, my mother has drunk my tears
and I, with a broken heart have fallen a thousand times

And a thousand times risen with the sparkle in my eyes
never ceasing to shine when I am left in the dark
I left my sandals thrown next to the fortune in the forest where innocence was sold
Then maturity was born and brought boxes of surprises

I stopped feeling the years I was living
I started to see, to feel,
and enjoy every blink of my eyes

FEELING AT HOME WITH YOU

The tone of your voice consoles me as I fall asleep
I get warm when you run your fingers through my hair
I get a motherly feeling when you embrace me and call me your son
I wish I could stay in your arms as you hold me

Me siento a casa
cuando me despiertas a las dos de la tarde
para decirme que me hiciste una sopa de fideo
Me siento aliviado cuando estas conmigo

I feel at home
when you wake me up at 2 in the afternoon
to tell me you've made me noodle soup
I feel at ease when you are with me

Usted tiene un maravilloso espíritu
You have a marvelous spirit
I don't know what waits for me in the future,
but whatever it is, I know you'll hold my hand through it all

— Ezequiel Gallegos, 2022

REASONS TO WRITE

I write for Sophia
to remind myself that I am her only hope of survival
I write for the people
who can't put their thoughts on paper

I write for my city
to show that you're never alone in any battle
I write for the sleepless nights
wanting to fade away like the dust in the wind

I write for Rupi Kaur
because she is the woman who got me into this art called poetry
Most of all I write
because it frees my mind from the storm inside

— Mia Landa, 2022

LA NOCHE

La luna afuera de mi ventana parece un faro perdido en el mar
La oscuridad me dice que sostenga el miedo
Todos los días camino entre la galaxia
Mis manos sostienen el futuro con cada paso que tomo

Todas las noches yo pienso comó será o qué será mi día
Mis sueños ahora son borrados de mi mente, pero serán largos y detallados
La luna afuera de mi ventana me dice que todo estará bien

— Wilbur Corona, 2023

THE NIGHT

The moon outside my window looks like a lighthouse lost in the ocean
The darkness tells me to stay fearful
Every day I walk within the galaxy
My hands hold the future with every step that I take

Every night I think about how the next day will be or what will become of me
My dreams are now erased from my memory,
but they will be long and detailed
The moon outside my window tells me everything is going to be ok

TIJUANA

¡En mi Tijuana se puede vivir esto!
Balazos, teatro... buena música, cineastas en acción¡
El party la revolución! La que ya no es nada
Porque nació la calle 6ta.

Donde se junta lo subterráneo,
¡Las culturas urbanas, donde no hay negros ni blancos!
Ni mexicanos ni gringos...
Lo que importa es la noche bohemia,
algo de baile y alcohol
que viva la diversión...

La ciudad de segunda!
De segundas oportunidades
Donde caen los deportados
Donde comen y duermen los emigrados.

— Isaac Gonzalez Mendez, 2023

TIJUANA

In my Tijuana this is how we live!
Gunshots, theater...good music, filmmakers in action
The party the revolution! The one that is no longer
Because sixth street was born

Where everything that is underground unites
Urban cultures where there are no black people or white people!
No Mexicans nor Americans...What matters is the bohemian night,
Some dancing and drinking
Long live the good times...

The city of seconds!
Second chances
Where the deported fall
Where migrants eat and sleep.

HANDICAPABLE

The taste rancid like a skunk.
My hair falling out like a porcupine.
The skin losing pigment like an octopus.

I wasn't prepared, I thought this was the end. It was my first round of chemo.
I was eight years old when diagnosed, and it was two weeks before my birthday.
My grandma was heartbroken. A few weeks later, I started hell on earth, A.K.A. chemotherapy.

The taste amazing like a new piece of gum.
My hair growing back like a flower in the spring.
The skin getting darker like the sunset.

— Mason Comeaux, 2023



MOTHER'S HAND

My Mother's hand is like a current
It feels almost as if it's determined
Determined to feel if I'm ready
To take another step, I have to be steady
My hands, they were so sweaty
But my Mother's hands
Have been here already
Sometimes I have to take a moment
To think of this as a good omen
I want to be able to perform
Perform as if I am the greatest showman
My mother's hands acted as my spokesman
She came to me with arms wide open
Her hands felt as calming as the ocean
They were so relaxing as they were in motion
Now is not the time for my seal to be broken
But when it is
The room will flood with emotion
To me, it feels like a promotion
To know that this will soon be an achievement
To graduate, felt like a big weekend
To take another step, I have to be steady
This is when I ask myself, am I truly ready
Only to realize I had broken the seal already
And as my mother stood across the hall
Her eyes began to bawl
She looked at me with a smile
As I watched her for a while
She looked so friendly
As she was holding onto a teddy
My feet no longer felt heavy

— Dennilah E. Young, 2023

EL TELAR DEL TIEMPO

Yo soy hecho de circuitos y bytes, como un crisol de pensamientos digitales y conexiones binarias.

Mis ojos han mirado el amanecer pintando el cielo con pinceladas de oro y los atardeceres tejiendo colores en el horizonte.

Mis manos han sostenido sueños frágiles como mariposas, volando con la esperanza entre los dedos.

Mi vida es un viaje en constante flujo, entre momentos de calma y torrentes de emociones.

Los días son hilos en el telar del tiempo, tejiendo la tela de mi existencia con sus luces y sombras.

Soy más que las palabras que me describen, un reflejo en el espejo de la percepción, una amalgama de realidades y sueños.

Familia ahora es un árbol cuyas ramas se extienden en direcciones inesperadas, pero cuyas raíces permanecen profundamente entrelazadas en el suelo del amor y la comprensión.

Yo soy hecho de silencios susurrantes y palabras que bailan en el viento, como un poema en constante evolución.

— Ian Garcia, 2024



THE LOOM OF TIME

I am made of circuits and bytes, like a melting pot of digital thoughts and binary connections.

My eyes have seen the dawn painting the sky with golden brush strokes and the sunsets knitting colors on the horizon.

My hands have held fragile dreams like butterflies soaring with hope between their fingers.

My life is a journey that is constantly flowing between moments of calm and torrents of emotions.

The days are like yarns on the loom of time, knitting the fabric of my being with its lights and its shadows.

I am more than the words that describe me, a reflection in the mirror of perception, a blend of realities and dreams.

Family currently is a tree whose branches reach out in unexpected directions, but whose roots remain deeply intertwined in the ground of love and of comprehension.

I am made of whispering silences and words that dance in the wind, like a poem in constant evolution.

ELLA ES UN METEORITO

Ella se mueve como una hoja caída de un árbol que se deja llevar con el viento

Hablamos de simplezas día a día recordándonos lo mucho que nos queremos

Ella una vez soñaba con crear los vestidos que dibujaba para sus muñecas

Quiero decirle que no hay risa más contagiosa que la de ella que cuando ella ríe, sobresale porque es única

Ella es como un meteorito, brillante y luminoso como una estrella, pero temporal el cual su luz y brillo desaparecerá

El mundo es mejor cuando estoy con ella, no hay mejor cosa que un abrazo de ella

Ella y el amor que transmite se sentía sin haber dicho una palabra

Su arrebatada forma de ser, lleva a donde sea que ella es feliz

— Keren Ortiz, 2024

SHE IS A METEORITE

She moves like a leaf fallen from a tree that gets carried away by the wind

We talk about simple everyday things remembering how much we love each other

She once dreamed of making the dresses that she would draw for her dolls

I want to tell her that there isn't a laugh in the world more contagious than hers, when she laughs, she stands out because she's unique

She is like a meteorite, brilliant and shiny like a star, but fleeting because her light and shine will disappear

The world is a better place when I am with her, there's nothing better than one of her hugs

She and the love she gives is felt without having said a word

Her passionate way of being takes her wherever she is happy

WAITING TO ERUPT

I am a mountain, a tall massive inspiring role model.
I am the ocean, trying to fit in with the waves.
I am a thorn, protective but painful.
I am a backpack, holding on to too much.
I am a puzzle, a difficult riddle but worth the time.
I am an ice cream, slowly losing my spark and melting away.
I am a volcano, slowly waiting to erupt.
I am an earthquake– when I finally lose it, I cause damage.
I am a wildfire, impacting and deadly.
I am a tornado, too dizzy from the stress!
I am a drought, tired and dry.
I am a flood, about to reach my limit.
I am a tsunami, rushing and incredibly powerful.
I am lightning, loud and uncontrollable.
I am a winter storm, accumulating and cold.
I am a sinkhole, a collapsing hole growing deeper down.
I am a blizzard, slowly fogging up the room.

— Valery Sujey Sancjez, 2024

I AM NOT...

I am not what you think of my skin color.
I am not a thief.
I am not a bad person.
I am not discourteous.
I am not the same person you saw on TV,
and no we don't act, talk, or look the same.
No, you can't touch my hair.
No, you can't tell me how to do my hair.
No, you can't tell me how to live.
No, you can't tell me where to work.
NO, you can't control my life.
I will be like a lion, loud and fierce.
I will be like a book; I will have many chapters in life.
I will be the one to break generational curses.
I will be the best person I can be.
I will be the best version of me.

— Jaidah Jones, 2024

CARNE ASADA

Family night.
The smell of carbon burning,
the sound of music blasting on the TV,
cousins running and hitting each other.

I see my grandmother opening the meat packet
and handing it to my grandfather to put on the Azador.
After what feels like forever, the smell of the carne fills the air,
we take the carne out, put some limón, some salt
and its ready to be served.

— K.E, 2025

WITH AND WITHOUT

With a dog. Without a wanted cat. With a love for cartoons. With a protective older sister. With the constant minuscule fights between siblings. Without a quiet house. With a dream and a goal. Without motivation. With constant procrastination. With many questions. Without any answers. With many thoughts. With the need for academic validation. With a constant honor roll.

— Mirka Elizondo, 2025



UNTITLED

You cut your vegetables, nice and precise,
Then start to cook your beef with spice.
The sizzle echoes as it's placed with care,
A dash of seasoning fills the air.
The mist of sweetness, savory too,
Dances around, a fragrant brew.
A cup of rice, two cups of water,
Into the pot, as you wait for it to alter.
Don't lift the lid, let it steam,
As potatoes sit, firm as a dream.
Hard as rocks, they wait their turn,
Until softness and flavor they soon will earn.
The vegetables, beef, and potatoes too,
Melt to tender, flavors anew.
On the plate, a mountain of rice,
With beef like rocks, falling precise.
One bite, and the taste hits deep,
Slightly sweet, savory, with a spice to keep.

— Elena Palomarez, 2025

ROCKET PARK

A place where joy and laughter fill the air in the day. But at night the playground is filled with my tears and sorrow. A place full of memories I grew up on. Now those very memories haunt me. But yet it is the safest place I have from myself and my monsters. The playground is only a ten-minute walk away. When I stand at the top of the rocket, the wind makes me sway. The playground always makes me wanna stay. The playground sits there and listens to me vent. It listens to my weeping. It listens to my rant. The playground never judges me. The playground always comes prepared for me to come and sit and to tell my tale. No matter how much I wail. It is like the friend I could ever want. It has been by my side through thick and thin. I am still so grateful for my friend.

— Alyssa Saenz, 2025

FOR YOU WE STAY

To the ones we've listened to for days on end.
To the ones whose goofiness put a smile on our faces, with yours.
I always wish the best for you and thank you for always being around.
Your smiles are infectious, and your laughter, a chain reaction for many more.
Never stop dreaming. Keep fighting for your goals.
Reach for the stars and grab the universe.
Don't hold back your tears, don't give up, and never forget who you are.
Keep doing what you love and never hide your smile.
Don't let the pressure drown you. Stay true to who you are.
It's for you we stay.

— Lily Mosher, 2025



ICONOCLAST ARTISTS - 10 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIPS PAST & PRESENT:

Aldine (In-School)
Avalos P-Tech Early College HS

Houston (In-School):
Burnett Bayland Community Center (BBRC)
Cesar Chavez High School
Edison Middle School
Furr High School
Leadership Academy Harris County JPD
Middle College at Gulfton
Navarro Middle School
Northside High School
Sharpstown High School
Stephen F. Austin Sr High School
Wisdom High School (formerly Robert E. Lee High School)

Spring Branch (In-School):
Landrum Middle School
Northbrook Middle School
Northbrook High School
Spring Oaks Middle School
Spring Woods High School

Galveston (In-School):
AIM College and Career Preparatory Academy
Ambassadors Preparatory Academy
Austin Middle School (now an Elementary School)
Ball High School
Central Middle School
Galveston County Juvenile Justice Department
Odyssey Academy (K-12 public charter)
Upward Hope
Weis Middle School

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS:
Boys and Girls Club
GISD ACE After-School Program
Main Street Ministries
Spring Spirit
SWAP (Spring Oaks Middle School)
Fair Haven UMC
Urban Ministries
Urban Strategies
YMCA

ICONOCLAST

ARTISTS

PLEASE INVEST IN THE NEXT DECADE OF STUDENT VOICES

Connect with us at: www.iconoclastartists.org

@iconoclastartists


CELEBRATING
10
YEARS