

**Life, pure and simple, with no
additives and preservatives...**

By Janelle C Coleman

with love...to mrs. lucy by janelle c coleman

have you found a good boyfriend? well, i'm lonely.
i shook my head no to the first, and gave a sincere awww to the last. besides,
ms seal, you have way too much spunk to be alone—

otherwise, i would have thought you were lying until i saw the roses.
treating yourself? not a bad idea. but it's a well-know fact that most male
florists are gay. stereotypically speaking, that is. unless that's your type.

at any rate, i'm sure your husband's rolling in his grave . either that, or dying to come
down there as you're handing me your kroger plus card, and wrap his arms around those
hips draped in floral print. i love your smile, ms seal...and no, i can't even tell that you're
still sick. paper or plastic? paper, you say, and please, call me lucy.

i'd like to imagine you somewhere, ms lucy, on a beach in france...or better yet, on the
french riviera staring longingly into the eyes of some statuesque creature named pierre.
he'd be an artist. tall. dark. graceful. with a studio apartment for your romantic escapades
and chadonnay to no end...

i could make up a thousand stories, ms lucy...write a thousand poems for you to read, fold
up, and place on your refrigerator next to the million and one quick and easy fettucine
alfredo recipes with some God-bless-our-home magnet you thought was cute. but it's not
the same. there's no our. just you. with a cart full of sacked groceries. amazed at how
lucky i am to be so ignorant.

poetry by janelle c coleman

take pen
to make alive
breathing
on paper
the secret

ingredient
is the
the mind
contortion of brain
can make butterflies
you

poet
possess
spirit that
sings
imagination who
gave birth to
your eyes

your
hands
God's butterflies
spilled ink drips
from
color blanched
wings
giving a little
of self each
time you
create
song

Lucky Charms by janelle c coleman

masses of marshmallow goodness float on air bubbles of milk entrenched with oat and grain cereal shapes now with 12 vitamins and minerals for that new wholesome flavor because they're magically delicious

but forget that.

where's the toy?

you force your hand and your entire lower arm in the box, the plastic bag containing the cereal scraping your skin

now you've got it all down to a science

you let your fingers waft through endless seas of pink hearts yellow moons orange stars green clovers blue diamonds purple horsehoes red balloons and rainbows, rainbows rainbows

sift, sift, sift...

nothing.

but this is only the battle.
the war is yet to come.

just take out the bag...easy now...and let your eyes graze the translucent bag through the pink hearts yellow moons orange stars green clovers blue diamonds purple horsehoes red balloons and rainbows rainbows rainbows...

still nothing.

you angrily rip open the bag allowing the cereal to scatter all over the table and onto the floor

scrambling, you cut through mounds of oat marshmallow and crumbs meticulously with crumb-covered hands loaded with 12 vitamins and minerals and no cholesterol for that healthy lifestyle

this has become your life, your dreams, your everything:

where the heck is that toy?

obsession rings like church bells in your ears. remnants of yellow moon sit crumbled on the bottom of your foot as you scrape through contaminated mounds of cereal *pink hearts yellow moons orange stars green clovers blue diamonds purple horseshoes red balloons and rainbows rainbows rainbows* on hands and knees—

where the heck is that toy?

seek and you shall find

the sifting of hands through crumb after crumb loaded with vitamin d even before you add the milk becomes a gentle murmur

swishswishswish the tile on the floor is cold and by now you are sweating and cursing without realizing that any normal 30 year old would not be obsessed with some stupid—

where the heck is that stupid toy?

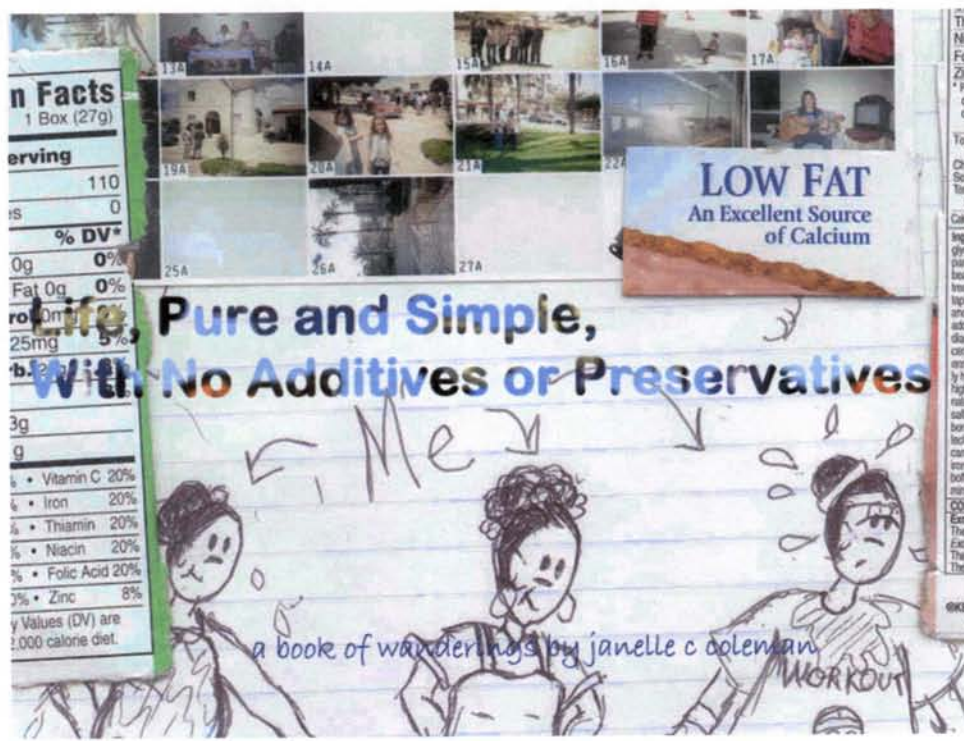
pink hearts yellow moons orange stars green clovers blue diamonds purple horseshoes red balloons and rainbows rainbows rainbows pink hearts yellow moons orange stars green clovers blue

twenty minutes have passed and as you scramble toward the next mound of wholesome goodness loaded with 12 vitamins and minerals you notice the order form on the box—

FREE WITH THREE PROOFS OF PURCHASE OF LUCKY CHARMS! KEYCHAIN IN EIGHT DIFFERENT COLORS AND STYLES. CHOOSE FROM PINK HEART, YELLOW MOON, ORANGE STAR, GREEN CLOVER, BLUE DIAMOND, PURPLE HORSESHOE, RED BALLOON, OR RAINBOW. OFFER WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

disappointment manifests itself in weary eyes and soggy magically delicious goo in a chinet bowl.

a dream is lost in the plastic debris of a smoke eaten factory in Minneapolis, MN



n Facts	
1 Box (27g)	
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25mg	5%
b. 22g	44%
3g	
g	
• Vitamin C 20%	
• Iron 20%	
• Thiamin 20%	
• Niacin 20%	
• Folic Acid 20%	
• Zinc 8%	
y Values (DV) are	
1,000 calorie diet.	

LOW FAT
An Excellent Source
of Calcium

Life, Pure and Simple,
With No Additives or Preservatives

Me

a book of wanderings by janelle c coleman

WORKOUT

Explanation of Project and Goals...

The basis of this final project is my own life. My main goals for this project are for the readers to recognize a growth in the narrators of these poems, and to establish a relationship, or, rather, a connection with the experiences outlined in the poetry. Using such influences as Rita Dove, Pablo Neruda, and William Carlos Williams, my intention is to give the general public an appreciation for the “little things” and the “everyday” that we, as a society, often take for granted. In this selection of poetry, I have used concrete imagery in an effort to “hammer” ideas, giving the reader something to chew on without all the extra fat of pre-packaged expressions and over-processed abstractions. My desire is that the people who read this book of “sketches” and “wanderings” come to realize that, though we come from different backgrounds and environments, we all share in the same humanity; it is my perspective that our experiences in everyday life, as ordinary as they may seem, possess a degree of wonder that should be explored. Furthermore, it is partly through these experiences of day-to-day living that we come to know both ourselves and one another. When it comes right down to it, we’re not that much different anyway. Life happens to us everyday, so why not embrace it? As William Carlos Williams nicely put it, “no ideas but in things.” In essence, I not only want to give my audience a new perspective on the so-called ordinary, but, I wish to give them life—pure and simple, with no additives and preservatives.

Selections from the project...

**In search of the muse:
Life without the MSG...**

hume-fogg...or idiosyncrasies of high school life by janelle c. coleman

gothic architecture consumes the eyes and the brain like little electric shocks

to the fingers all properly lined on the keyboard

typing the next issue of the knightly news.

I was a journalist then, mercilessly raiding textbooks, classrooms, and stimulating literature in search of a usable language

But laughing across from the library on the third floor

was actually where I got my sense of words

it was partially Careese's fault with her exaggerated gestures and impressions of anal-retentive teachers who cared

but just a little too much

she was funny because she was real, point-blank, never wavering in her point-of-view

as mean and impressive as any grade-A English teacher

we called her ghetto and with crossed legs, wildfire eyes, and high-heeled boots

she proudly accepted her title.

Later, as we tossed textbooks into our backpacks and put on our coats, she became hoochie-mama.

We hume-foggians learned from each other those days in crowded hallways and on ancient wooden benches that the principal thought looked nice, but no one told her the truth

Had philosophical revelations in the midst of chemistry, geology, and sometimes English at 7:30 a.m.

right before class

Amanda with some picture she had stayed after art class working on to reluctantly appease Ms. Bergman who adored her and Danielle with AP US History thinking of synonyms for the word "corrupt" to describe American society

I said "power-hungry" and it worked well enough just like everything else just like life in a place where we all cried through exams and crazy stuff like dreams and girlfriends and boyfriends

what is a good synonym for "burn-out"?

nobody objected the answer: hume-fogg, nonstop education for the weary brain and Campbell soup for the sin-sick soul...

Conner Chiarello imbibed wordy literature in hippie garb. Marty and Sarah and Malissa wrote a novel and worked on it for four years while Amanda took on the identity of Pablo the reincarnation of cheese—

Tiffany was always mellow, though, especially in the way she turned her head with Shirley temple curls elegant and motherly—

don't say "good luck," you need a "blessing"

I already had one on 700 broadway right across from the courthouse on the front side

Kenya liked the chicken sandwiches there, but I took it all in stride

In Spanish class I was Juanita in between utterances of "ah, sí" and "¡no chicle!" John became my partner and public enemy number one,

especially when he beat me in listening comprehension:

contesta la pregunta.

¿quién es el hombre?

it's not eres, it's errrrres he said with his glasses fogging up in the cold air. I pointed an accusing finger at him like celie does to mr. in the color purple and damned him to, or so I thought, his already inevitable fate:

inflation of head and pure brain fallout

he laughed as always and shook his head at my anger and poor jared the bystander hadn't a clue

later, we are best friends and underneath argumentative tones in crowded hallways after 3 p.m. there's always the semblance of brotherhood to the rhythm of some lofty tune--

THAT THING! THAT THING! THAT THIIIIINNNNG!

Tuesday afternoons on the third floor there is always some jam session in between rumbling stomachs and the mastication of turkey sandwiches and the day before yesterday's cafeteria food...

hold up, Amma, you forgot this part—

heads are bouncing to the percussion of erasable pens (because they're just so convenient) on wide-ruled paper

heart of darkness is now scrambled language in british vernacular that somehow finds a place in the back of the mind

somewhere between I forgot and I don't care until 12:40 when it's time for one of Ms. Harmon's tests—

just like Conrad intended.

We so sexy.

We so fine.

We're the class of '99.

Hands wafting in the air with 99 gestures during pep rally. The puny sophomores hate us and boo. Freshman are just lost unlike us who survived.

At HFA it's all about survival of the fittest.

Teachers kicked our butts.

Administration gave us something to talk about.

ACT and SATs became a measure of greatness.

And we all carried the crown, laughing like fools on hardwood floors and throwing paper balls at each other. Jared making bad puns and Megan with the dancing feet shuffling with blue folder in hand about to start some writing project. The Asians started a mafia and I attempted to write words, forming sentences, carving the semblance of language out of remembrance—

remember that time we went somewhere, said something, or dreamed something...

and there we were—

shining members of society underneath the spotlights blinding the gaze of proud parents as the trumpets blared and the flags were carried to the rhythm of pride and circumstance.

and here we are going—

shuffling toward the illumination that is future, that is new...

that is all antiquity for us, the survivors...

learning to survive in different circumstances and in different worlds

only to be tossed in the cyclic tempest of life and the attempt to become

real trailblazers—

Lucky Charms by janelle c coleman

masses of marshmallow goodness float on air bubbles of milk entrenched with oat and grain cereal shapes now with 12 vitamins and minerals for that new wholesome flavor because they're magically delicious

but forget that.

where's the toy?

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ode to ramen by janelle c coleman

i.

i embrace you like fool's gold. reading your package instructions, i boil the water, once again forced to glare at the insidious smile of the happy Maruchan man's face on the package.

yet again.

i am enslaved to you.

my impoverished state puts me at your mercy.

college student wages are no match for your power. angrily, i rip open your contents. with gritting teeth, i utter another 'yet again.'

ii.

my parents started me early.

daddy on sunday afternoons quenched my hunger with your monosodium glutamate goodness, always draining the water before putting you in the bowl. then, as if to say that i am old enough, he handed me the flavor packet, letting me stir. twisting my fork, i'd gather up the long cords, stuffing the evenly coated threads in my watering mouth.

later, aunt vanita would show me the most sophisticated means of noodle consumption: saltine crackers. grandma would revolutionize noodle versatility by adding cream of mushroom soup and cheddar cheese. to make it taste better, she said. really, it was to mask the fact that the kids ate them practically everyday.

iii.

by the time i reached high school, i was taught to loathe you. american social class structure told me that you were an enemy of the middle class, and a friend of the impoverished.

i couldn't be substandard.

yet now you have reduced me to this.

iv.

america destroyed you. a sinister someone gathered you up and pulled you from your roots in china. you were worthy then. the epitome of eastern culinary euphoria only to be shipped to the states and americanized, freeze-dried, factory-produced, and confined in brightly-colored packaging—a memoir of your former glory. a handout for the poor, you've fallen from first rate in

asia to the very last shelf of the rice and pasta aisle at Super Wal-Mart only to be scavenged by impatient mothers and meal plan deprived college students.

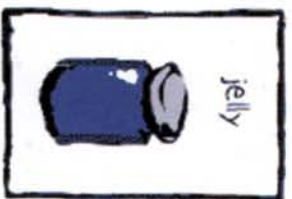
v.

still, i must admit your dominion. your convenience and low price at 12 cents a pack gives me no choice.

so forget nutrition facts: low sodium is for sissies.
forget status quo. pride is no longer a question.

ramen, manna of the meek.
sustenance for the socially inept.
i will not judge you.
i will no longer chastise.
but as i stare at you in the bowl, my eyes failing from hunger,
my stomach will beckon you, and
i will tear at you, hungrily,
with the silent reverence of emperors.

Part Number Two:



You Can't Have Peanut Butter and Jelly Without the BREAD...

of realism and superman by janelle c coleman

i don't mean to be brutally honest, but i can't seem to find you.
over there? in the sky? well, sorry. there are no
stars out here to tonight. in the trees? yep, they're right. superman
is just about as real as the easter bunny, except the
latter is more lovable and cute. so, lois, dear, what's your fascination
with this guy? i mean, how can you love this fantasy? this blue-eyed
apparition of perfection? i can only laugh at the whole here-i-come-to-
save-the-day proposition. birds and planes are more reliable. is the
whole world dying to be rescued? are they just looking at the sky, waiting
around for non-existent falling stars with faces to believe in? maybe. but,
what if they're right? what if, at night while my eyes are closed, he is watching
me, waiting for king kong to chase me up to the top of the empire
state building so that he can swoop down and scoop me up in his arms, my head
rested on the bright red S on his chest? maybe. well, for now, while the
world is watching old reruns of cartoon network, i'll look up at the sky and
secretly hope that the blue man i cannot see is somewhere in the midst,
coming to save the day —

morning love song by janelle c coleman

i.

i'm not going to lie
i love the bluesy way you love me on sunny
cloudswallowed mornings
while i tread on cold tile floor
with bare feet
soggy with the heaviness of feel-so-good
sunlight
till i realize that the wind is blowing streams
of dewdrop
breath
through my window

ii.

skin is the wrapping that yet longs to be
touched by spirit fingers
that stroke my cow pajamas
the ones that say i don't do mornings
and i'm not going to lie
i don't

iii.

pulling cord of the blinds
i invite you in
perfect sunblood follows the curvature
of mountains and downtown skyscrapers
assembled just the way it's supposed
to be

iv.

standing in the mirror
i am trying to find a reason to be
alive
maybe the solution lies in the burnt red
brown
of awkward legs
and bare feet
stepping over last night's unfinished

homework
and high-heeled
loafers
or in the face that awaits the tidal
rush of sun and the encircling
arms of a mystery without a face

v.

creator,
i imagine you this morning
as the embodiment
of sunsky
and lifebreath as your eyes
consume the prize
that is yours to claim—

almond eyes
grandmama hips
grasshopper legs
all too african lips
just-like-your-mama nose
and red brown skin

oh, how i love to be loved
with that slow take-your-time-easy
sort of love
that kind that drives you crazy
the kind that reminds you that you
are the creation,
bearing the cloak
of honeysweet morning
drenched with the subtle fragrance of spilled
sunlight and baby powder