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Intro

Read by BJ

We are the kids you see here today
Who love to write, perform and pray
Sometimes it's hard to rewind and forget what happened in the
past
It wasn't worth it. It didn't last.
Where do we turn? Where did we crash?
We, as youth, forget who we are
Cause in life we took trouble too far
But tonight you will see
That trouble and crime is not for you to believe.
Look upon our faces with cheer and joy.
But don't laugh because we are not toys

We Wear the Mask

by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Read by Shaquille Unit H

We Wear the Mask

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes, --
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.
Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.
We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!

The Mask I Wear

by Mark

Read by Shaquille

The mask I wear is ashamed because when my Grandmother passed away we cried and I sat down by myself and cried every night thinking about my Grandmother. Also my Dad passed away too and my first cousin passed away and my best friend passed away too Lil' D.

The Mask That I Wear

by Cedric

Read by BJ

The mask that I wear is basically fake because it hides my feelings. I try to smile and grin it away but it still don't work. I just want to leave JDC and maybe I can have a real mask. Every night I go to sleep I pray and tell myself face up. My mom always tells me to never give up. I was one of those kids who grew up without a father. I also had a daughter at the age of 13 and I lost her because of a miscarriage.

The Mask

by Antonio

The mask I wear is real

It's not fake.

It's a dark side of me to cover my fear and my sadness

But I ain't no punk.

The mask is my light brown skin color

My mask is the other side of me.

Mask

by Shaquille

I wear a mask to let you see and think that I am fine.

I say no words, but you should know that I am living.

No tears on my face but inside I am crying.

I wear a mask to hide my thoughts and clear your mind.

Tamell's Mask

by Tamell

The mask I wear is that sometimes I lie about my hooping skills and I act like I'm happy but I'm really not. I'm ready to go home. I'm a superstar on my court in my head.

My mask is silent but deadly like a black widow.

The Mask of Me

by Bruce

I hide feelings sometimes in a day

We hide feelings in a different way

Anger and fear doesn't affect me

I wear my mask predictably

You can tell when you see

That I am the mask of me

Sometimes it might be stress, Pain

Sometimes it's 'cause I've gone insane

Made a choice that's probably bad

Now I know my mother's sad

You can tell when you see

That I am the mask of me.

Mask

by Demetris

When I was down
I always played like I was up
Go on an po' dat liquor in my cup
Knowing deep down dat I'm hurt
Even feeling like putting myself in da dirt
Like when you murk dat boy you act like you ain't care
But the fear was in your eyes showing dat u was scared
I see in yo face
Knowin u hurt
Seein flashes of dat dead body everyday

Mask

by Robena

My mask is when my dad hit me in the eye
But I did not cry
My mask is when I fell in school trying to be cool
My is when I got locked up in that room
When the door goes click and there is no more room

The Mask I Wear

by Curtez

The mask I wear is a sad mask cuz I am locked up again cuz I did wrong. And I don't know what to do it is up to the judge and God. But I thank the Lord that I am still alive.

My Mask

by James

I wear a mask of pain and struggle but I know that I can change my mask by doing the right thing and that is stop showing my weak side of me because I can do it if I put my mind to it. But I am going to school and staying clean. But I was at the wrong place at the wrong time and if my strong mask would have been showing, I would not be in my situation. But it's a way of a good mask because I am trying my best to let the judge see my good mask.

Mask of Pain

by Brandon

Read by Demetris

I've wore the mask of pain.
Hiding my pains
Grandpa's death
Getting locked up
Wasting my life
Making wrong decisions
That is my mask of pain.

The Mask I'm In

by Devionne

The mask I'm in is kind of good. I have my days when I'm locked up it's all bad but when I'm at home it's good so I hide my face with a mask when I'm locked up but I can get through it. I'm going to get through it. When I get home I'm not coming back in here. I said that last time. But this time I'm not lying I promise. Because I don't want to have this mask on no more.

We Wear a Mask

by Monte

We wear a mask

(for one reason)

Everybody ain't bleeding

You might talk a good game

But you ain't creeping when I'm creeping

Or speaking what I'm creeping

Take a walk in my life

(shoot outs)

And handcuffs

So don't ask if I got stripes

I been going through some things

(who understand)

Is what I'm saying

When I'm praying to the man

We wear a mask

(because)

The life we living fast

They can't wait 'til we relax

Because we making fast cash

(see his mask)

It's fake

Like a plate

Ain't knowin what it take

He ain't built to make it shake

(see his mask)

Had me fooled for a minute

'til I got this recent case

And he ain't stand up

And got it

Mask

by Derek

My mask

It covers up the past

Livin fast

Tryin to get the cash

My girl mad

But really she's glad

To see me ova come tha past

Quick to lash if you cross my path

Fast like the wind blow

I lay low

Ready to let go

With a killa flow

So let's go

But just know

I'm cut throat

"whoa"

Don't let go

Just flow

Like I told you so

But no

Don't copy

You sloppy like joe

But guess what

I'm bout to blow

And I'm gon let you know

How to flow

Dead And Gone

Lyrics by T.I.

Read by: BJ

No more stress, now I'm straight, now I get it, now I take time to think, before I make mistakes just for my family's sake that part of me left yesterday. The heart of me is strong today. No regrets I'm blessed to say the old me dead and gone away.

I turn my head to the east. I don't see nobody by my side. I turn my head to the west, still nobody in sight. So I turn my head to the North swallow that pill that they call pride. That old me is dead and gone. But that new me will be alright.

I Gotta Change the Way I Live My Life Yesterday

by Shaquille

Mama proud that her son made it to 16
But Mama cried when Daddy died when he was 17
And that year was in '99, the month of September,
The day my mama say she promise she always remember
And I could just picture in my mind how I felt
Having to raise a young man all by her self
Nothing but a wish, pray, and live on
Another single black female and she still strong
And I know to this day Mama is still weak now
Wishing that she never would have made me
But the fact still remains that Mama got a son with no father
He was slaughtered
By a hand gun

Course

I got to change the way that I lived my life yesterday

I got this chance to take in my life to find a better way
'cause living life the other day and
Living life 'cause it's a better way.
A life is long, probably short to you
'cause you ain't locked up – you at home.
Days passing and I'm like whoa that one is gone.
And it's time and no time because I am not home.
And they not believing nothing you say.
And they say what did you do today
And I say same thing as today
Of Course

Dead and Gone!!

by Alfonzia

I had people by my side everyday, like my cousin, brothers,
sisters, and everybody I hung out with. I had just met my
cousin and like 2 months later they died. It seems like
everybody that come into my life and I get to know them, they
get locked up or they die.

The Part That's Dead and Gone

by Curtez

The thug is gone 'cuz I lost my auntie to the streets.
And my life is full of fire 'cuz I am full of evil
But I am through with all of it
Gangs and drugs and guns
That is going to end me up
Dead or locked up for life
That is the part that is dead and gone.

Dead and Gone

by Tim

The old me was...
Always on da block
Tottin' glocks.
Slangin rocks.
Didn't listen or think, I just acted.
Doing it for the fast money.
That's the old me.
It's time for a change.
The new me...
Feels good to do good
Thinks before he acts.
Listens to the positive.
Has goals to complete.
Knows more about himself.
The old me didn't feel anything
Because I never thought about it.
Now that I think about the things
I have done in my past I feel bad about what I did.
The new me will not put myself in the negative.
Period.

Dead and Gone

by Kenneth

This part of me is dead and gone because I'm tired of missing home. Staying on the block all day not wanting to go home. In my cell in green all day thinking how I did my family wrong. Thinking how much I want to go home, I turn my head to the west and see my homeboy's doing wrong.

I turn my head to the east and see my family wanting me to come home.

So I go north and think about what's right and wrong.

But what I want to do is wrong – walking around with a gun,

Thinking I'm strong, knowing I was in the wrong

But don't care 'cause it feels good and knowing I'm just putting on.

My dad did it so they look up to me to know wazzup.

So I get up and keep my head up.

Change

by Alfonzia

If I can change something about me it will be a few things like getting locked up and hurting people. If I keep getting locked up it will hurt my family and the people I love, and I wouldn't get a chance to have a nice job. I would like to change my whole life around 'cause it's people that want to kill me and if they can't get to me, they will go to the people I love, and I don't want that to happen 'cause that will make me feel like it's my fault.

Poems for Who I Really Am

Just Like Me

by Tim

Black describes me.

My mood, my personality

Black is a color that everyone likes.

Black subtle,

Not too flashy, and not too boring.

Black is power, authority.

Black moves like air.
Close your eyes, it's everywhere.
Black is nonchalant.
Black is carefree.
Nothing phases this color.
Black is hard as steel.
Black is my best friend.
Because we're just alike,
Plain, basic, understated,
Unlike a red or orange or yellow.
We don't brighten up a room.
We bring a coolness
That can't be produced by another.
Stone-faced is our expressions.
Relaxed is our mood,
Our state of mind.
We stand alone,
But we can mix
With all people, all colors.

My Life Dream

by BJ

My life dream used to be, to act, dance, and be free.
Now you see who I'm bound to be.
Now I feel like a dummy 'cause I'm staring at four walls
But when I feel the pressure when I hit the ground
My skin starts to crawl
It's not 'bout balling, stalling or who you ain't to be,
But not to fake and take the road you seek on who you want to
be

The MVP of the NBA or you want to be the dope fiend on the
corner
I might say use the gifts God gave you before it fades away
'cause your life dream only last certain days.

Poem By Derrion

Read by Bruce

Why he so mad for,
Why he go off on them
The master
Power

Never Told You

by Monte

Chorus:

I probably never told you
That's stressin'
(My grandma) on a breathing machine
She need a blessin'
(My grandfather) body ain't right
He learning lessons
Lost my brother at 12
Ever since then I been a savage
I probably never told you
That I'm stressin'
My brother ain't built for the streets
He don't know he slippin
My whole family know I'm a goon
For that they trippin'
(So God)
Lend me a hand

I'm down here stressin'
(Verse 1)
I'm blowing cash
Granddaddy, purp
If you ain't blind
You could look into my eyes
And realize I'm hurt
I'm on a mission
Forget religion
'cause God just pennypinchin'
It's kids up in detention
Hoping they don't go to prison
I don't think about church
If I need help
I'm praying first
But it seem like that don't work
Why every time I'm down
God always helping clowns
When I'm down
He don't never come around
I don't even hear a sound
On my part
This coming from the heart
I can take you back to 12
When it start
Or maybe 14
When it started to fall apart
I don't know
If you feel me
Or hear me in this verse
But it's too much

For one person
God, it's getting worse
(Chorus)
"Never Told You" (cont'd)
(Verse 2)
This second verse
Come with a whole lot of problems
I can't solve them
I'm in the middle of all of them
But that don't mean
I started them.
Just so happen
A part of them
My brother
I brung him in this struggle
I'm the reason a hustle
Became a hustler my brother
And that's when my grandmother
Became a part of all my trouble
Double trouble
It's two of us
Tryna bubble
We got the police
Coming to her house
She coming up to court
She don't like to come visit
Because we break her loving heart
And her husband
They do the same thang
But he stopped smoking cigarettes
And she ain't wanna change

I can't blame her
She stressin' too hard
'cause she got two little boys
Who (ALWAYS)
Catch a charge
(everytime) it's shooting outside
She think it's one of us
When she know the (police) riding
She think they chasing us and that
Got me like
(Man God)
This life I'm living rough
Put my hands
Up to the sky
Saying, "God help me with this luck"
But every time I holla
He don't seem to holla back
Just for that
I'm selling crack
Making stacks to relax
(Chorus)
Don't get me wrong
In this track
I ain't prayin'
I just want (God)
To start hearing
What I'm saying
Do he love me?
If he did
He a understand
Times when I'm thuggin'

I understand
Times when he clubbin'
'cause he doing nothin'
When I'm prayin' to him.

Growing up

by Jamaine

Growing up was very bad
Now you know I'm looking back
Thinking about the situation that had me very sad
Growing up, getting child abused
In every way seeing people eating good food
Wished I had a taste
Seeing myself in the Midwest streets,
Big kids, li'l kids, getting maced up in the street.

Straight Way

by Tim

Verse 1:

I'm lookin for a straight way
Don't know where to go
Everytime I turn around a banger here
A bop there
They gone aim one at yo stockin cap
But that ain't what it's all about
Always talkin bout a drought
But I'm a keep it pushin straight
Cause people always wanna hate
But that don't phase me
Cause I'm a do me and you do you
Cause I'm a find my dream before you find you

Chorus:

I don't know
If I can take this anymore
It's kinda hard to say
I don't know
If I can make it through the day
So to God I pray

Verse 2:

My life is messed up from head to toe.
So I close my eyes and start throwin blows.
Cause I don't know where to go.
So I grab my mic and start doing shows.
Cause money is on my mind
And money is my motivation.
I try my best to be patient.
I know it's a cold cold cold world.
So I try to be better by putting down dat berretta
Lookin for a different way to stack dis cheddar.
Cause I'm tryin to be a man
So I live on the other hand
Not sellin dreams
Just doing the right
Tryin best to stay clean.

My Money

by Jamaine
Money is time man
Money is mine man
That struggle man
It's about that grind man
Wind it up man

Hustle ya buck man
Gwap yo money man
The day looking sunny man
Man ya money ain't right man
You ready to fight man
You thinking bout money man
I'm thinking bout life

Our Influences

Person I Look Up To

by Laquonn

The person I look up to is my mom. My mom is who I will always go to for help or just to have a talk with her. She help me when I'm down, and she know how to make me happy. Also sometimes when I have a good semester in school, she gives me something really special, and I get a lot of money.

Also I know she will put clothes on my back, and I know she will always love me and do anything for me. That is one person that I will always look up to, and she will always be in my heart at all times. Since she helps me out, I will help her out by stop behaving like an animal, and show her I can be the best.

My President

by Sean

Read by Franklin

2009 is going to be a great year for me. We have our first black President, Barack Obama. He seems like a great man on TV, but I wonder what is he like up close in person? The

whole time during the campaign he was talking about change. Now that he is in office, I wonder will he live up to his word, like bring the drops back home.

Anger Go Away

by Robena

I want my anger to go away, how I treat the people I love because I don't know how to show them. How I do not know how to walk away from things when they are not worth fighting for.

I feel angry when it seems that I have no one to have my back and I think of all the things people have done to me or when I do not have some one to talk to when I get mad.

I think I can kill this by just having someone I can go to and just be me. Just someone to look up to instead of people who drink and smoke. Someone that says put down the weed and say pick up some books.

Friends

by Sean

Read by Franklin

A friend to me is some one who don't lie, always keep it at 100 with me. We hang out, be with the girls together. If we get in trouble, we get in it together; never leave someone behind. A friend has to be someone I want to be around.

My Lost One

by Darrell

See what happen was I lost someone who I love so much and who wanting to be with for life, and I didn't understand what I

had and now I miss her everyday. I still want to be with her and I can't see her with somebody else!

Friends

by Franklin

Friends are people who you can always trust around you, and who won't try to hurt you. Friends are people who won't try to get you in trouble or deep, *deep* trouble. Friends are people who are close to you for a long time. They are people you hang out with at school. Friends are people who don't lie to you. A friend is a person who you hang out with, and a person you like.

My Swagg

Swagga Like Us

by Demetris

Can't nobody on da block

Have a swagga like me

See me in the streets

Never dirty so clean

Got swagg like my attitude it's so mean

I got big knots but still wearin skinny jeans

U know I got (gwalla?)

Boppin bottles wit the models

Throwin all types of dollars

Got your girl wanna holla

When you see me in da club

Pockets stay stuffed

Wit nuthin neva less than a dub

So fresh so clean

Da fit bright like snow
Betta have ya stunna shades
Cuz you might get blinded by da ice
When it glow
You know me gotta stay fresh
From my head to my toes
Walk in da club betta put ya knots up
Say ya knots somethin
But compared to me it's nuthin
You got a wad full of 1s
I got a wad full of 100s

Swagg

by Derek

No one on da corner got swagga like me
Residential P been know up in these street
Swagga so official I think I need tissue
Yo girl love my swag so I think she's gonna miss you
True religion pants wit some pradas on my feet
Chain with a P and shirt wit a V
Love to go clubbin all the haters muggin
My swagga on top so they might as well stop
Hater blockaz on but I been up in my zone
My swagga from da street that's just why it's so sweet the pz
Residential that's y I'm presidential
Tell how my hat cocked that I keep a fat knot
I swagg all night
So you betta punch ya time clock
Got a big knot
Might as well make the world stop
Toting big knots gon' make the whole club pop

Lil Dyro swag it out gone tha club on lock

My Swagga

by Darrell

My swagga is being on point and walk to walk and talk to talk
and wake up feelin' good and lookin' good for the girls and
havin' money and put in my golds and hair done. Put on my
skinny jeans and new shoes and being fresh and just look good
for the girls. And I have a swagga nobody got!! Nobody have
a swagga like me.