

SEMAJ BROWN | FLINT INAUGURAL POET LAUREATE PRESENTS

BLACK DANDELION™

CONVERGENT VOICE



INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE
MULTI-MEDIA YOUTH PLATFORM

A portrait of Semaj Brown, a Black woman with voluminous dark curly hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark top and a necklace with large circular pendants. The background is a dark, textured pattern of stylized leaves. Several white dandelion seeds are floating in the air around her head.

ABOUT Semaj Brown

"Poetry advances the quality of life of citizenry when organized as a precious power tool." — Semaj Brown

Semaj Brown is Flint, Michigan's inaugural Poet Laureate, and the recipient of the prestigious Academy of American Poets Poets Laureate Fellowship award, 2021. Ms. Brown is the author of the poetry/prose memoir, "Bleeding Fire! Tap the Eternal Spring of Regenerative Light," Broadside Lotus Press, 2019. Black Enterprise.com, in a recent article, noted the global recognition of the poet laureate's "Black Dandelion" poem via the Dear Poet Project, Academy of American Poets, <https://poets.org/dear-semaj-brown-2022>. Summer of 2022, AT&T, Dream in Black African American Futures Afro- futuristic platform licensed a powerful audio excerpt of "Black Dandelion" for a national television commercial in celebration of Black generational excellence. In addition to being a noted poet/educator, essayist, dramatist, and university lecturer, Ms. Brown is a thought leader, who deconstructs obsolete paradigms while synthesizing new philosophies, building educational installations in museums, Boys and Girls Clubs and more. Her civic initiative is the Poetry Pod Project (P3). P3 derives from her award-winning pedagogy, "Poetry as a Second Language (PSL): Passcode to Literacy through the Semajian Method" which is integrative, reflexive art/science programming that utilizes both left and right brain modalities. Semaj Brown is the creator of Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice, a multimedia youth platform launched at her Keynote lunch presentation for the Michigan Council of Teachers of English MCTE centennial conference to a standing ovation, October 2022. For additional information please visit website: <https://semajbrown.com>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 About Black Dandelion
- 6 Black Dandelion Blooming: Poem Progression
- 7 Poem “Black Dandelion”
- 9 Quotes from Poem “Black Dandelion”
- 10 Invitation to Participate
- 14 Application
- 15 Poetry as a Second Language: Passcode to Literacy
through the Semajian Method
- 16 In Gratitude

Semaj Brown is available to facilitate participation in the
Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Platform via consultation and workshop.
Contact Semaj Brown: submit@blackdandelion.org

ABOUT Black Dandelion

Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice

Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice is a multimedia youth literacy arts/science civic platform for middle and high school students. Creative thinkers respond to the poem Black Dandelion through literary expression, exploration of an artform, or by delving into the disciplines of science and ecology. We ask youth to find their inner dandelions and grow like weeds!

AT&T & Black Dandelion Poem

There is no doubt the world will be looking for black dandelions now that the corporation AT&T, in a search, found the video of **Flint, Michigan Poet Laureate, Semaj Brown** reading her Black Dandelion poem on her website. An excerpt of the audio recording of the poem highlights a one-minute commercial of the acclaimed **Dream In Black, Black Future Makers Afrofuturistic Lifestyle** platform, and is airing nationally on television and throughout social media.

The Academy of American Poets & Black Dandelion Poem

The Academy of American Poets distributed a video of **poet laureate fellow, Semaj Brown** reading her poem, Black Dandelion to middle and high school students. The poet laureate received letters from youth from across United States and world via the ***Dear Poet project***. The letters represented a range of ethnicities, Asian, Armenian, Black, White, and more. Exchanges can be read on the Dear Semaj Brown page. bit.ly/3yPbGfj.

About the Poem

Raked by Innocence, the narrative voice of the poem is a four-year old little Black girl who recollects the turmoil of the Civil Rights era. She associates discrimination and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with the “**mow down**” of dandelions, her beloved flowers.

MCTE & Black Dandelion Poem

Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice, a Multimedia Youth platform will officially launch October 14th at Michigan Council of Teachers of English Centennial Conference ---Semaj Brown as Lunch Speaker presents, **Poetry as a 2nd Language: Passcode to Literacy through the Semajian Method.**

Black Dandelion poem was first published by Chapel Hill Press, 2020 and was also expressed as an art video for The “New” McCree Theatre Youth Poetry Explosion, 2020.

Black Dandelion: BLOOMING POEM PROGRESSION

BLACK & DANDELION

2022 | Black Dandelion: Convergent
Voice, Multimedia Youth Platform



2022 | Black Dandelion expert
in AT&T Commercial

2021 | Academy of American Poets
Dear Poet Project distributes
poem throughout United States
and World

academy of
american poets



2021 | Art video by Emily O'Boyle Youth
Virtual Poetry Explosion, The "New" McCree
Theater

2020 |
"DANDELION REVOLUTION"
Flint Courier News Column



2020 | PUBLISHED by Chapel Hill Press

BLACK DANDELION

by Semaj Brown



Age four— Witnessed my first mow down
Twinkling ground stars, cut by a murderous lawn mower
Feeling the blade, I fell, curled like a snail in grief

12 full moons folded into Spring — Perennial promises prevailed
Bees celebrated return of dandelions in a skirt of twirling, yellow bliss

Flowering bouffant mirrored my spiky little afro
Jagged edged “lion’s tooth” leaves paid tribute to my snag-a-tooth smile
Me and my freedom fighting flowers frolicked to survive the
Scissoring, Up-digging, Poisoning

Warning Signs hovered like low hanging clouds:
No Blooming Allowed! Blossoms Will be Prosecuted!
These brave plants grew just for me
Grew in spite of a society that favored a monochromatic landscape

1965— Mr. Brother Malcolm X was assassinated, big word for a pre-kindergartner.
I was convinced he must have been a dandelion, Reverend King too,
and the Johnson boy who lived one turn down the street, that way.
The Johnson boy was shot by the police for growing in a monochromatic landscape.

Training Wheels Off—Bike riding across insecure cement,

I peddled the bumpy path
waving solidarity to each surviving, sunburst noggin,
each fulfilling the promise to ornament lawns and
flourish souls with lemon drop hope

Dandelions bare art of
endurance and escape
transforming into pearl puffs
floating with ephemeral intention
carrying the spirit of the weed.

13 Full moons faded into July — “I am a proud weed!”
Yes, I declared that shocking proclamation standing
in the pulpit on Youth Sunday
Vernon Chapel A.M.E. Church

I added to my speech on David and Goliath
my impromptu improvisation of Dandelion Dogma:

“We are Black Dandelions who will NEVER be destroyed.
We grow the power of goodness for generations into the future!”

I yet remember the hat framed faces of the pious,
amused and mortified.

Senaj Brown



***“Age 4
Witnessed my first
Mow Down...”***

***“BLACK DANDELIONS
Bare Art if Endurance
and Escape...”***

***“WARNING
NO BLOOMING ALLOWED
Blossoms will be Prosecuted
BLACK DANDELION...”***

***“I am
a
PROUD WEED...”***

***“Perennial
promises
prevailed...”***

BLACK DANDELION

You are Cordially Invited to Participate
In Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice, A Multimedia Youth Platform

FAQs

Who Can Participate?

Ages 11 through 19 Middle and High school Students+

Can a student enroll independently?

An adult must complete and sign the application.

To Participate, To go "Dandelioning"

Follow the Stages of the Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice which reflects the life Stages of the Dandelion Plant.



Stage 1 : Seed Germination, The Rooting ***Education and Exploration***

INSTRUCTION: Distribute to Students a-d below. Students should view and listen to the video, and read the poem. Students should define any unfamiliar words, and record in their **Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Workbook**.

- a. Distribute to students the following:
- b. Video of Black Dandelion poem
- c. Copy of the Poem
- d. Quotes from the poem
- e. Black Dandelion Workbook



Stage 2 : Development, The Growing ***Discovery via Discussion and Inquiry***

INSTRUCTION: Students should write, express verbally, record responses to Discussion Questions a-e in their Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Workbook. Each student should form a minimum of one question to be addressed by the group or individually and record in their Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Workbook.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How does this poem make you feel? Please convey any positive or negative feelings, and explain why
- b. Do you Identify in any way with the speaker? If so, why and in what way?
- c. What images come to mind as you hear and read this poem? Please explain how these images are connected to your life and history.
- d. What is the message or lesson in this poem? To whom is the poem speaking?
- e. What colors do you feel in the reading or listening to of this poem?

What significance do these colors have to your life or history?



Stage 3 : Selection and Implementation, The Flowering *Project Manifestation*

INSTRUCTION : Students determine if they want to respond to a quote provided in Stage 1, select a different quote, or excerpt or respond to the entire poem. Video responses should not exceed 3 minutes. Written responses should not exceed 1200 words. Students can respond to the Black dandelion poem using many modalities. Students should select one or indicate an interdisciplinary or integrative choice. Responses should be recorded in their Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Workbook.

Students can Respond in a variety of ways:

- Write a letter to Semaj Brown
- **Write a poem**
- **CREATE VISUAL ART**
- **WRITE A RAP**
- Stage a mini play
- Create a video
- Create animation
- **Build a science project**
- **COMPOSE AND OR PERFORM MUSIC**
- Choregraph a dance
- **INVENT SOMETHING**
- Write a civic letter
- Photography
- Compile research
- **TAKE A SURVEY**
- Create an integrated project
(combines more than one genre or discipline)



Stage 4 : Pearl Puffs, The Seeding **Project Submission**

1. Submit students' projects in the following formats: pdf, word doc, mp3, to email Submit@blackdandelion.org
2. Scheduling is flexible. To schedule a start date for organizational or institutional participation in the Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Platform, contact a Black Dandelion representative at submit@blackdandelion.org
3. All participating students will receive acknowledgement in Semaj Brown's column, "Poetry Confessions: Tea Time with the Poet Laureate" in the Flint Courier News. Compelling, creative and interesting projects will be featured in a Zoom presentation during April, National Poetry Month. In selected locations presentations will be live.



Stage 5 : Seed Distribution Strategies : **Dandelioning**

The act of DANDELIONING is full circle, completion of the Black Dandelion: Convergent Voice Life Cycle with career professionals assisting participants to develop and plant a pathway into their futures. A network of participants will yield support to one another.

APPLICATION TO BE COMPLETED BY AN ADULT

Name of Adult _____

Position/ Title _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

School Name _____

Name of organization (if not a school) _____

City _____

State _____

Youth Name _____

Age _____

Grade _____

Youth Signature _____

Youth Name Printed _____

Adult Signature _____


Submit Applications to submit@blackdandelion.org

ABOUT POETRY AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (PSL)

Passcode to Literacy through the Semajian Method

The Semajian Method installs Applied Poetry as an activation mechanism for Poetry as a Second Language (PSL), the futuristic, integrated pedagogy of geosocial-emotional intelligence. PSL is designed to dissolve obsolete academic paradigms while synthesizing new procedures to amplify literacy capacity, improve skill-based learning, and heighten cognitive expansion across seemingly disparate disciplines.

Five reflexive frameworks/principles representing a practice in curriculum conception and implementation culminate in the imagination of Language Arts, and STEAM classrooms. These ever-evolving Communal Learning Spaces (CLS) offer the new foundational realities of enlightened global consciousness.



MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH



CHAOS TO COMMUNITY
MCTE'S FALL CONFERENCE 2022

POETRY AS A 2ND LANGUAGE | PASSCODE TO LITERACY
THE SEMAJIAN METHOD

"Poetry advances the quality of life of citizenry when organized as a precious power tool." – Semaj Brown
Semaj Brown is Flint, Michigan's inaugural Poet Laureate and the recipient of the Academy of American Poets Poet Laureate Fellowship award, 2021. Ms. Brown is the author of the poetry/prose memoir, *Bleeding Fire! Tap the Eternal Spring of Regenerative Light*, Broadside Lotus Press, 2019. Her new collection of poetry (slated for publication by Wayne State University Press), *Walking Rivers* introduces the poetry opera: *The Tea Blood Odyssey* which interprets the iconic year, 2020. In addition to being a playwright, essayist, and university lecturer, Ms. Brown is a thought leader who deconstructs obsolete paradigms while synthesizing new philosophies. Her civic initiative is the Poetry Pod Project (P3). P3 pedagogy is interdisciplinary and intergenerational; arts and sciences are utilized to enhance literacy. For additional information, visit her website, <https://semajbrown.com>.

SEMAJ BROWN
FLINT, MI INAUGURAL POET LAUREATE

MCTE CENTENNIAL CONFERENCE
KELLOGG CENTER
LANSING, MI | OCT. 14, 2022

IN GRATITUDE

Dear Beautiful People,

Gratitude is my heart. To my Family, Friends, Fans, Supporters, to the Collaborators, Organizations, and Institutions that have engaged my interdisciplinary, literary /literacy civic art throughout the years, I thank you ALL. I extend unyielding love and appreciation to my ever supportive husband, James Brown, M.D. Also, thank you to the Academy of American Poets. To the Dreamers, and the dreamless, to the faithful and the faithless, to those who know, and to those who seek, to those who turn things up downside in, and to those who carry tradition in gnarled knuckles...

Poetry is my 2nd language, spiritual dialect, way of being; it is a cultural life raft for our community— the golden root tip of blood, of bones, and that combustible joy ignited in the spine of fire laughter. Thank you for accepting my offerings, as my service is my practice.

Special Thanks to Darolyn Brown: Literary Consultant, Amanda Thomason: Graphic Designer, Susan M. Kornfield: Legal Representation, Pam Purifoy of PRProMedia, Arlene Williams, and Linda Richardson for their continuous support.

“Poetry advances the quality of life of citizenry when organized as a precious power tool.” -Semaj Brown

SEMAJ BROWN

*Flint, Michigan's Inaugural Poet Laureate
Academy of American Poets Poets Laureate Fellow, 2021*

CONTACT AND CONNECT

EMAIL: submit@blackdandelion.org

WEBSITE: www.semajbrown.com

BLACK DANDELION PAGE : www.semajbrown.com/black-dandelion/poets.org/poet/semaj-brown