

Sixteen-year-old Charisma Holly of Detroit helped kick off Detroit Homecoming with a performance of the following poem. The theme of this year's Homecoming was "Detroit 2050," and we thought the poem painted such a vivid picture of Detroit's history and where it is — or could be — heading, we wanted to share it with a wider audience here. Holly is a spoken-word artist and a senior at the Detroit Edison Public School Academy, where she participates in InsideOut Literary Arts Citywide Poets after-school program.

— *Crain's Detroit Business*



NIC ANTAYA

If I Wake Up In Detroit 25 Years In The Future,

There better still be Better Made chips
stacked on shelves
officially making them 120 years old,

sold next to two liter bottles of Faygo;
liquid gold in the summer months.

The radio plays Marvin Gaye Motown
Sound alongside J Dilla Beats
as I tell my future kids, "Y'all don't know
nothing about these."

I imagine taking them to see the Riverwalk
I write poems about,
and Belle Isle and Urban Soul;
spend the day in the classic Cass Corridor
dubbed Midtown
as I tell nostalgic stories for the city we are
in right now.

Right now,
I am sixteen and whenever someone asks
me
what being a Detroiter means,
I spell out Detroit backwards
From T to D
with the last T in Detroit being for
technology;

Where Michigan Central Newlab expands
and
Black Tech Saturdays puts laptops in the
hands
of tomorrow's innovators.

I for investment in the future of our city.
In my head, we plant flowers in front of
the King homes
where my cousins play tag in the grass,
and there are no longer shards of glass
stuck in shoes after a game of football;

where there are desks in every classroom
of every building labeled public school,
bringing books to each library,
and buying back the property
to repurpose previous vacancies.

The O in Detroit is for ongoing growth
where wishes for economic prosperity
have the opportunity to become reality.

R is for revitalization,
real estate and real education;
the key to bringing the city
up to its potential.

Imagine those empty eyes
of boarded up abandoned houses
bought and
given new life
new lights, porches, roofs;
roots planted right here
where generational wealth
is built up year by year.

T stands for transformation;
the manifestations of all our wildest
dreams.
Creations that seem hypothetical,
but can be achieved.

What if we
had electric car charging streets
all around the city to reduce
the gray clouds of pollution
by promoting the expansion
of electric cars?

What if we
planted gardens in every community
to feed those in need
and clean the smog
like cigarette smoke from factories
so the kids with asthma in my classes
have higher quality air to breathe?

What if we
had creative spaces, murals, and open
mics
on the east side,
west side,
anyplace where art and
culture can collide?

I can see
a Detroit where
my aunt parks at Walmart and her car
does not get broken into,
the Lions really do win the Super Bowl,
and we finally fix roads.

As impossible
as it all sounds,
I know if we can hope,
then we are capable of anything.

The E means elevated enterprise;
small owned businesses growing right in
front of your eyes;
neon signs, downtown stores, City Bird,
AutoBike;
highschoolers already sizing up supply
chains,
crochet, bake, making a custom pillow
case
because the side hustlers of today
are the entrepreneurs of the future
as long as we continue to believe.

Believe in the progress we see
and the visions that we will someday
make into reality
because in the Detroit city,

The D
has always been for dreams.