

## LOUISIANA, MY HOME

My Louisiana is full of the scent of magnolias. I live on the banks of a majestic bayou in a two-story house. All I have to do is look out of my bedroom window and there is all the Picasso anyone would never own. In the morning I watch the sunrise and dip my feet in the dark water. At night I get ready and go to the French Quarters to do what everybody else does in Louisiana, have a good time.

I hate to say this but I guess I have to. Everything I just described is a great big lie. I live mid eighth ward, and my Louisiana is full of the scent of weed. In my hood bodies do sway just like in the quarters, but they are not moving to a jazzy beat. Their movements are commanded by two almost silent pops. The shuffling of feet makes an awesome rhythm. It's so hypnotizing, I can't move. I'm standing in plain sight on my porch. I'm not scared but I am numb. I wonder if I'm even alive.

I'm writing this essay, so I guess I survived. He sure didn't though. His second line will probably be next week. It's amazing how many fall in a week like mosquitoes in a bug lamp. People should really take a stand, but they are tired and weary of working hard all day and ends still don't meet. Our daily suffering is not shown in those commercials where everyone is smiling and drinking. If I was the mayor or another high-ranking official, I wouldn't show it either. Why would I, if I'm making a stack from tourists? Besides they're only trashing one little city.

My Louisiana is a great place to visit and have fun, but take my advice don't stay here!!

**Maria Hernandez**, Douglass Students at the Center

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*(One of three essays from Douglass that swept the awards in local PTSA contest)*