

2009 to Present

When I was younger,
I used to think money *did* grow on trees,
and, if you tried hard enough,
you could really be who you wanted to be,
but as I grew older, my thoughts became more accompanied
with do this and do that, try this but buy that.
My world was becoming more of a media-playground
where dreams do exist, but only come true in movies
because money can only buy so much happiness,
and my schoolmates were learning to fight fire with fire
because *Chris Brown did it*,
burning matches until the box ran dry.
Now our world has gone from
yes we can to *none of it is easy*,
but if the latest pair of Jordans is in our hands,
all is right in the world-
just not in the *real* world because 3.5 million U.S. citizens are homeless and hungry
and hidden
because we Americans decide it's ok to take care of other countries
and not put ours first.
Welcome to America, land of the free and home of the *let's not get caught in another war*,
where education is treated like torture
and having true friendships is in the ultimate state of rarity,
and even *rarer* do we see people who stand up for what they believe in
and more people who sit down with friends and just revel in
the fact that more lives have been harmed by the whipping out of a camera
than there would've been if we just gave a shoulder to cry on.
It's 2015, people. Wake up and smell the roses-
and, by roses, I mean the pools of debt we're swimming in,
but half of us are collecting checks from taxpayers
that we can put towards a pair of shoes that will only last until someone steps on them.
That Michael Kors bag looks good, but you know what would look better?
The nourishment of your child through learning,
but he's in and out of fast food restaurants,
looking for a job to tide the family over
until the casino on Fifth Street finally opens up.

by Tabitha, Petersburg, VA