

## ***"We Were Artists"***

*by Javan Howard, Creative Writer, TATIP Trainee 2014-15*

We were artists  
exploring ways to  
express our sufferings  
put into words the crazy  
thoughts and dry syllables that hung  
to the roof of our mouths  
like a foreign language.  
thirsting for ways to  
contextualize our  
empty experiences into  
conversations, artistic crafts  
and other works of arts.

We were artists  
looking for ways to  
create within the instability that  
consumed our minds,  
the world we lived in,  
by breaking our fear to be visible.  
So they called us crazy  
for following our dreams  
teaching for social justice  
and creativity, advertise  
us as Mad Men, creative  
engineers chartered outside  
the edge of the common core

We were artists  
striving for ways to  
grow, a yellow brick road  
of some sort. A Teaching Path,  
Blueprint for the Arts, a plethora

of creative avenues bridged across  
multiple intelligences, practices,  
techniques, simultaneously  
strengthening our voices  
through the art of collaboration,  
until our minds became  
a Graffiti Wall of ideas.

We were artists  
drawing pictures from  
personal experience, using  
our imaginations to anchor  
a community, discourse.  
We were artists. Blank  
pieces of paper that would  
not be crumbled. Airbrushed  
with strokes of encouragement  
and teachable moments  
that reminded us there  
are no mistakes in art  
only opportunities for creativity