

99 WRITING

Who I Am

by Duanté, 826 Valencia

TYPE
NARRATIVE

Ms. Fong grabbed the talking piece and said, “Hello, my name is Ms. Fong and we are gonna do a community building activity where we say our name, gender, and race.” Ms. Fong’s hands left the talking piece to the person to her left and they passed it to the next and the next until it got to me. At first I just stood there and didn’t say anything. It seemed like I was there for 1,000 years until I finally said, “My name is D-Duanté and I’m a boy and I’m black.” (By the way, I had a stuttering problem when I was little.)

Then one kid yells, “No, you’re not. You’re white.” The whole class just stared at me as I looked dumbfounded, and didn’t know what to say so I just passed the talking piece to the next person to get the attention off of me.

After class when I was outside a few kids huddled around me and said, “Why you wanna be black?”

And I mumbled, “I don’t want to be black, I am black.” But no one believed me and through the day I

kept thinking, Am I black?

When my mom picked me up, I jumped in our long black car and told her what happened and her first response was, “I don’t care what any of those kids say. You’re black, don’t let nobody tell you nothin’ different.”