

99 WRITING

Bigger Than You Think

by Sharoya Bracey,
826NYC

TYPE
NARRATIVE

GENRE
BIOGRAPHY

GRADE 10-11

Being tall, I automatically feel so close to the ceiling in close spaces, like elevators. At a point in my life I hated them. *Why?* Well for one, it is an enclosed space. It is so boxed in that the height is never a height where you feel short in it. It is one of those spaces where being in there just makes you feel awkward. It only makes matters worse when rude people remind me how abnormal I am.

My stepmother and I had walked into this elevator on many occasions, but this time was special: a lady walked on to the elevator with us. She was maybe in her mid- to late forties or early fifties. She had on a long, big coat because it was wintertime. You know, one of those older females from your building or street who was always in someone else's business and always loud; you could tell she was coming down the block because she was always talking to someone, and her inside voice is yelling? That was this woman.

She walked into the elevator and awkwardly looked me up and down. I ignored it because people always

look, but inside I felt the elevator slowly closing in on me. The walls were getting smaller and shorter. The elevator was going down, and I felt trapped. I could feel her judging me.

Finally, she slightly turned to me and said, “How tall are you?”

How short are you? I thought to myself and looked at her because of her weird and slightly rude question. I replied, “I’m five foot eleven.”

The woman smiled and looked forward again, only to turn back with squinting eyes, “Do you play any sports?” *Do you not play sports?*

I gave her the sweetest smile I could, “No, I do not.”

She, not realizing her rude question, continued to speak, “Well you should; you shouldn’t waste your height.”

I looked at her, my eyes piercing through her face with a look so cold that she would’ve thought she was in an icebox. But that did not faze her. “You should play a sport; you could go to college.”

I felt my head now touching the ceiling of the elevator as I went rushing down. My body then seemed too big for this space. My body and point of view were all different. At this point, I knew exactly how Alice felt after drinking the potion. As I was crashing down, I looked at her like she had a flying pig on her forehead, and I silenced myself, only because I knew the words I could say. Saying that my height would be wasted and

that would be my only ticket into college is like me saying, “Well, you are short so you don’t have any specialty; you aren’t anything because you aren’t tall.”

But I smiled and once again said, “No.”

After we left the longest elevator ride ever, she continued to talk about my height to my stepmom as I walked away from them. The saddest part about this story is that that woman didn’t know me from a hole in the wall. In that short, small, and awkward elevator ride, she had my entire life planned and figured out, solely based off my height.

I am still in the elevator even when I’m out of it. Every time that woman talked, she brought me to a lower place and made me feel so abnormal and weird in that elevator. However, after that day, that elevator began to take me to a high place, a higher mindset, a higher feeling of myself. It was the point when I realized that I was not abnormal, but different. My being different made her want to pick me out, and I am now okay with that. Elevators used to make me feel so big and awkward, but now I feel empowered, different, above-average, and tall.

99 WRITING

Technology Gives Me a Way In

by Jonas K.

TYPE
NARRATIVE
PERSUASIVE

GRADE 9-12

Technology is different for me than it is for most people my age. Many teenagers are taken hostage by an overwhelming need to be connected twenty-four seven. This need for constant access to social input leaves many of my peers disconnected from the world around them. In my life as a teenager, technology is a lifeline into the reality many seem determined to ignore. I type to communicate, and technology in my world is used in a way that is unlike that of many. I share my journey with technology in hopes that others my age will learn to open themselves to a new world of technology where voices like mine will be heard.

I am autistic, and although I talk some, my verbal output doesn't reflect my thoughts in their entirety. Not unlike my peers, I depend on technology to share my opinions. However, the platform and audience vary greatly. I don't need my thoughts and feelings broadcast on social media. It is not a part of my world nor does it affect my view of myself. Perhaps

this is just another factor that sets me a part from others my age . The way I see it, technology helps me join the real world while for others it creates a way out. What I need is to open communication with my family. Typing to communicate allows me the opportunity to do that. Their dedication to my happiness never falters, and I have welcomed the chance to appreciate them with typed expressions of gratitude.

Many people these days spend more time looking at screens than they do interacting with people in person. Faces illuminated by shiny devices leave the world glowing with disconnected people wandering through life totally unaware of anything not happening on screen. I know it seems like an autistic mind is not really turned on like a typical person's is. I assure you this notion could not be more wrong. We are very much aware of what's going on around us and want nothing more than to be a part of the conversation. Under the pressure to participate in conversation, thoughts may come out in fragments. For example, thinking a full sentence, yet saying only a word. Through the use of technology, I am able to express myself with the depth that more adequately corresponds to my thoughts.

Imagine waking up every day knowing that you'll spend all of it unable to express yourself, the people around you at a loss for a way to make a solid connection. In my autistic world, technology gives me a way in, while my peers use it as a way out. If you have the ability to say what you are thinking, I encourage you to not let yourself take it for granted by wasting the chance to tell the people in your life what is on your heart and mind.

The truth about technology is that while doing its share of harm, it also does a great deal of good. There are voices to be heard, should you choose the right path to listen.

99 WRITING

Used To Be Booty, Now I'm Good

by Rey, Grade 9, 826
MSP

TYPE
NARRATIVE

I was playing basketball and I didn't get picked because the people I was playing with thought I was booty. But I had to show them how good I was. They made me salty because of that. Then after I didn't get picked, so the next game I went to the outhouse cause we were on the rez and there were no bathrooms in the gym. But as I was halfway walking, some got-dang ALIENS came outta nowhere and abducted me.

When I was up in their ship, they said they saw me not get picked in basketball and they said they were gonna give me super crossover powers. So when I got back to earth I was trash-talking everybody and I crossed them with my super crossover powers. I shot the ball and I made that ball. And then I went to a tournament that was run by the NBA. The winner would get a contract with the Timberwolves.

But when I was walking home the night before the tournament, I had to walk through a dark area and I just looked up and saw them aliens again and they abducted me again.

They said, “We can’t let you keep the powers because you’ll become the best ever.”

So I was like, “WTH.”

And then they dropped me out of the ship and then I went home.

I couldn’t sleep all night just wanting to show all them aliens how good I could be without the powers. So that day I went to the tournament really confident. I had to show everybody how good I was.

It was a five-man tournament so I had to find people to be on my team. I got all of the homies. I got Stephan, Trey, Robert and my brother Joseph. We won the whole tournament and me and all the homies got NBA contracts with the Timberwolves. I had a great career. And then I became the best ever to play basketball. The GOAT. I started from the bottom now I’m here. Came up from the proj. Used to be booty, now I’m good.

99 WRITING

We'll Still Try: The Fight of the Standing Sioux Against the Dakota Access Pipeline

by Destiny, 826NYC

TYPE
PERSUASIVE
POETRY
STEM

GRADE 6-7

Point of View of Oil

There are so many things I'm used for
But they want me to do much more
I've become an environmental issue
There are so many arguments against me
But why?
What am I doing wrong?
What did I do wrong?

Point of View of the Native Americans

Help us fight against this
You're ruining our water
We're worried about our environment
Because of your impact
We wonder, why do the people still want to build
this?
Why does the government to hurt us?
What did we do?

Point of View of Oil

I'm sorry for what I'm doing

I'm trying my best to stop this
Whoa, I didn't think I was doing this
Much damage
I have no choice, I'm sorry
People need oil
My question is, what happens
Next?

Point of View of the Native Americans

And our question is, how did the idea of building the pipelines
get there in the
First place?
Thousands of us gathered to stand against this
We've been stressing about this

Point of View of a Woman Named Daisy

Hello, my name is Daisy
And this has been driving me crazy
This has been stressing me and my family lately
We all deserve to have clean water
This is the people's territory

You have no right to take this away

Point of View of the Government

We've won, there's no point in fighting

Against us

Point of View of the Native Americans

We'll still try

99 WRITING

To change everything, we need everyone.

We are not alone

by Jeremy Hsiao

TYPE
POETRY

GRADE 11

chanted as crowds of people roll

through the space between coasts

an overpopulated marble race

holding signs beaten blue and green

they share their confidence with the sun

as it shifts to the horizon

shining through billowing white glass

with an ominous glare like ink as it spirals

into this turquoise gradient.

shout out the fanatics

dilating satellites in their eyes,
something great lies hidden
circling the fringes of dust balls
the stars flash white, red, yellow
in between black, the blue
searching for anomalies in confetti,
only rocks to be left behind
if nothing is done.

To change everything, we need everyone.

whispered under the breath
of children in the dark

red eyes in the flashes like Antares,

closing in, a gaping mouth, a gasping scream

the lights flicker on,

the sun is up again

change is needed.

murmured in hearts of torn pillows

the words sit, shadowed

by the dark side of the Earth,

you see flares of electricity in capitals and cities,

the last flickers like crushed crickets

that's all she has left.

99 WRITING

What It Would Be Like In the Future! 2040

by Maia, 826michigan

TYPE
INFORMATIONAL
NARRATIVE

GRADE 5

In the future, it would have beautiful scenery. The skyscrapers would be even taller than they are now! They would go all the way to space! You can walk into the building and take an elevator that will go all the way to space. In the elevator, there would be a button that says, “Space!”

The person will need to be prepared to go to space! It takes one hour and twenty-two minutes to go all the way to space in the elevator. The elevator travels at one hundred miles per hour. So if you wanted to go to the floor above you, it would take zero point ninety-five seconds to get there.

In the space elevator, you will not feel anything while you are traveling at one-hundred miles per hour. It would be one of those elevators that you wouldn’t be able to feel a thing. It would be like you are just standing in a room that isn’t moving at all. It is like that elevator room in that show named A.N.T. Farm. There would be a touch screen and everything! It would be amazing in the future! I’m really looking forward to the future! And to go see real space without any air tanks! It will be great in the future!